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the scholar cornered

What Is A Dictionary?

Webster's Third New International Dictionary (which I refuse to call W3 as if life were too short for words) has been in circulation more than a year and has received from the start the kind of critical attention that a work of that size and importance deserves. There have been reviews, descriptive, admiring and hostile; there have been newspaper editorials, including one in the *New York Times* which exemplified by parody the doctrine of the new edition; and there have been articles in literary and general magazines, which pointed a moral while treating the fundamental question: What is a dictionary? Mr. Dwight MacDonald in the *New Yorker* and Mr. Wilson Follett in the *Atlantic* delivered, with abundant examples, the most philosophic of the attacks on the new work, and Mr. Bergen Evans, among others, offered rebuttal and counterattack. Both sides have written with heat—the heat of indignation—except when they meant to be freezingly cold with the cold of contempt.

All this is gratifying. For it shows that despite the many signs of linguistic indifference in daily life, some people at least still feel strongly about language and can be roused to battle about it. The debate has not been confined to print, and it is not over; it is very much alive in living rooms, students' rooms, editorial rooms. When it came up as a subject of interest at a meeting of the board of THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR, everyone present felt that its importance warranted notice from one of us, and I was delegated to express the board's "position." This was extraordinary, for more than one reason. Never in my experience has the Editorial Board desired to reach a position; it respects without effort the individuality of each member and contributor, and it expects and relishes diversity. What is even more remarkable, none of those present had given the new dictionary more than a casual glance, yet each one felt that he knew how he stood on the issue that the work presented to the public.

That astonishing and possibly premature concurrence within a group of writers whose work almost invariably exhibits judicial tolerance and the scholarly temper defines the nature and character of the new Webster: it is undoubtedly the longest political pamphlet ever put together by a party. Its 2662 large pages embody—and often preach by suggestion—a dogma that far transcends the limits of lexicography. I have called it a political dogma because it makes assumptions about the people and because it implies a particular view of social intercourse. This is indeed why any page of the work provokes immediate resistance or assent. No one who thinks at all can keep from being a partisan. And the explosive charge contained in the definitions and examples (let alone the prefatory matter) is reinforced by the intellectual theory that underlies the political and social views. That theory is the scientism of the linguists, which is bound to divide thinking people still more sharply into adherents and enemies. The issue comes down to this: Are the products of the human mind (in this

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instance language) to be treated like natural objects? The answer Yes means that whatever "the people" utter is a "linguistic fact" to be recorded, cherished, preferred to any reason or tradition. The new dictionary might thus be called avant-garde, not to say surrealist. To which its detractors say: "It is voluminous, but gives no light."

No doubt this explanation of the passions aroused by the new Webster will seem to some far-fetched and abstract. How can the definition of a simple word such as "of" betray the political and moral biases I have inferred? Quite simply: the populism and scientism of the new lexicon appear together, for example, in the twenty-first use of "of," as an alteration of "have"—"I should of come." This is given as representing, "especially in written dialogue, a supposed dialectal or substandard speech." The word "supposed" is laden with prejudice, and one is amazed at the suggestion that this "of" occurs in writing only. Since this usage occurs frequently in speech, as everybody knows, one is bound to wonder whether its inclusion in a famous dictionary does not confer upon it the lexicographer's blessing. Certainly there is an implied defense of these of's, who are also the have nots.

So much for democratic feeling. Now to its concomitant. The previous illustrations of "of" are each introduced by the designation: "used as a function word to indicate. . . ." The phrase is therefore repeated twenty times, although the word being defined—"of"—is never repeated but is represented by the sign ~. This is science. In the same way proper names and adjectives are never capitalized but carry the indication "usu. cap." This is system. Science and system play throughout the work a strongly rhetorical part. They do not save space; much less do they serve the reader's convenience. The use of a sign for the word we are interested in is a subtle attack on The Word, just as it is a blow struck against the sentence. The dictionary ceases to be a book for readers interested in words and sentences; it becomes an imitation ~ the technical handbooks ~ physics and chemistry. By this means words are stripped of a quality they have had since the dawn of civilization and are reduced to algebraic signs. I am not using a figure of speech: it is a mathematical yearning that induces the linguist to invent the term "function word" for preposition, conjunction, auxiliary verb and the like; just as it is algebraic and not verbal usage that leads the modern pedant to insist that we write: "In his *The Waste-land* . . . ," as if the joining of "his" and "the" were indispensable to an equation that would come out wrong by the omission of either.

These common examples bring us to the questions implied in What is a dictionary? namely: What is language? What are words? The so-called scientific doctrine which has killed grammar and rhetoric in the schools asserts a number of incompatible things about language: that it is a system of sounds used for communication and therefore changeable at will; that it is a natural entity which grows and evolves, and therefore follows natural, not arbitrary laws. Linguistics, it is clear, is playing at technology as well as science. It goes on to teach that the sounds of language can be given symbolic representation in written forms, thanks to which the evolution of both sounds and forms can be traced over millennia and across continents; yet the science also holds that language is speech and speech alone; hence the ways and opinions of writers have no more importance in linguistics than ideas have in Marxist materialism: both are the empty froth carried down the powerful stream of history. It follows that the English language comprises whatever is intelligible to any group that thinks it is speaking English—Puerto Rican children in New York, native bureaucrats in India or Nigeria, Ozark mountaineers, B.B.C. announcers, judges of the United States Supreme Court, and unfortunate idiots with cleft palates.

There is undeniable grandeur in this acceptance of Babel, which strives to emulate the scientist's acceptance of all phenomena. And it is indeed true that since the pioneer work of Henry Sweet, the prototype of Higgins in Shaw's *Pygmalion,* much has been

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learned as a result of applying the scientific hypothesis to speech. But there are difficulties in the attempt to equate physical events and language, and it is in trying to escape these difficulties that the linguists whose theology is embodied in the new Webster become arbitrary and absurd. Their scientific detachment deserts them; they begin to champion the underdog linguistic forms against the socially approved, and they show the precariousness of their position by growing abusive and baring fangs when it is challenged.

A science obviously cannot admit that from the outset language is something more than speech, and words something more than a device for communication. Words are nevertheless anything but neutral symbols like numbers. They breed fancies and sport individual features. Feelings attach to words, as may be tested by calling a stranger a harsh name. And the feeling is not in the word, since the same word in an identical tone may be applied to a friend with affectionate intent and be received by him with equanimity. Nor, despite all the new schoolbooks on Structural English, does clear communication suffice to establish a form of words as part of the language. The latest Webster can imply by its hospitableness to barbarism that there is no such thing as good English, no correctness in grammar, syntax or diction, yet it is not English to say: "What age have you?" "How much hour is it?" "It makes cold this night." The system of words and ideas that constitutes a language has quirks of its own and remains a mystery. It *looks* as if it could be changed at will; it *looks* as if it followed natural laws—vowel shifts, slurrings, inversion and substitution of consonants, et cetera; it *looks* as if logic had no hand in its alterations; it *looks* as if reasoning were at work making forms alike and introducing distinctions; it *looks* as if mere repetition in use warranted a word or a form; it *looks* as if convenience were an irresistible cause of change—all of these are true and all false. The merest glance at history proves and disproves each of these propositions. "Invite" as a noun has been in use for two hundred and fifty years without becoming good usage. Our Webster itself calls it "now chiefly dial," which is, I think, an error. In my experience the word is colloquial and faintly depreciatory; but why so, when it is formed from the verb as regularly as "request" or "demand," and when it is (or would be) equally convenient? No one can tell. Again, "them" as a demonstrative adjective ("Hand me them pliers") is certainly the people's choice. It was so as far back as Chaucer, yet the majority vote it has obtained in every generation still leaves it, in Webster's term, "substand."

Evidently caprice is at work, a whim of iron which no scientific observation or dogmatic authority can reduce to order. But what one concludes from this can take one in divergent ways: one can become a linguist or remain sensitive to the varieties of linguistic experience. The linguist blinds himself to the truth that language is a very mixed affair, like art, love, government, history; which is to say life at its most comprehensive. Language indeed comes closest to being the envelope of life; it is the web, certainly, of conscious life. As such it is not abstractly detachable, like the segments of physical experience conveniently cut off for study by science. This difference explains why it is that the linguist has no sooner affirmed the folly of a normative grammar and dictionary than he is forced to mutter "substandard" at every other word. In this, to be sure, the linguist is a child of the age: "incorrect" being a horrid, undemocratic term, he replaces it by "substandard," which is fraternal and scientific. This is the formula by which we have turned in the poor in exchange for the underprivileged and backward countries for undeveloped areas. But little is changed in fact. There is a norm, a standard, in the languages of civilized nations, for the same reason that there are manners and customs. The difficulty of ascertaining at any moment what is right in these modes of action does not abolish the idea of rightness, any more than the variability of manners abolishes manners themselves. Many people neglect to say "please" and "thank you," but their omission does

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not constitute a new absence of norm; it only defines their boorishness. And this perception is not limited to the last effete representatives of a dying civilization, or books of etiquette would not be the perennial best sellers that they are. One of the chief vices of the new Webster is that it flouts the strong impulse toward rightness that animates the very masses whom the lexicographer means to flatter by his laxity charged with condescension.

To be charitable as well as fair we must ask whether the new lexicography is not in fact responding to contemporary tendencies in ourselves, rather than imparting to us the results of objective research. Take the assumption that speech is primary. The proposition is obviously true historically, but is it true as a social fact after three thousand years of written literature? It was surely not self-evident at the beginnings of lexicography, which was undertaken by and for the literate. Anyone who uses words by profession knows how important it is to preserve language from confusion through misuse. A writer's or an orator's difficulties come from the inadequacies of the audience as much as from those of the tongue he uses. And when literature has slowly clarified his medium for him, the good writer feels that he has entered into a contract with all his predecessors *not* to debase the coinage they have bequeathed to him.

This view might still prevail if modern literature itself had not first become impatient, "realistic," and tried with ever greater fidelity to reproduce the vocables of the marketplace. The playwright has always done this by fits and starts, yet without influencing the learned's notion of language. It was Scott and the novel descended from him that introduced first "dial" and then "colloq" and finally "vulg," to a point where one must keep Partridge's *Dictionary of Slang* by one's side and learn thieves' cant to appreciate the highest forms of the new in prose or poetry. From the moment that reality is equated with the average, science and democracy and linguistic devaluation form a single cultural tendency.

For it is this translation of reality into realism that undermines both formality and form in the use of language. In the novels of Sinclair Lewis, whose ear for the demotic was remarkable, phonetic renderings often replace words and phrases; Babbitt is made to say: "Zizesaying." Similarly, when the new Webster seeks examples of adjectival "them" it quotes the novels of educated writers—Helen Eustis and Ellen Glasgow. The whole nineteenth century, the whole Romantic revolution in poetry, lies behind the accelerated deformation of words which the new linguist thinks he discovered by scientific methods. At one end of the span, Wordsworth and Victor Hugo democratize literature by adapting the tone, diction and subjects of street ballads, and at the other end, Lewis Carroll, Mallarmé and Joyce put the quietus to syntax and usage by punning and distorting and confusing the words of the tribe.

In this task of demolition they were aided by the engineers and tradesmen who were forging new words out of half-understood Greek and Latin roots to denote processes and products. The litter of "telephone," "Kodak," and their kind continues to increase, adding acronyms and portmanteaus (for example, Unicef and Puritron) in shapes and in numbers that will soon require a separate glossary, a second volume of Webster.

Even before that point is reached, we grasp what the modern answer is to the question we started with: What is a dictionary? As *Webster's Third New International* shows, a dictionary is a heterogeneous list of vocables, abbreviations, acronyms, ready-made phrases, trade and proper names, which have been selected on current populist-scientific principles as constituting "the language." Such a dictionary is certainly not a list of the words generally spoken by speakers of English. DNOC is not a word, nor does it stand for a spoken portion of the language, since it represents "dinitro-ortho-cresol," which is unspeakable. The so-called dictionary is thus in part a manual of formulas; in part a handbook for editors, scientists and other professionals.

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For the under-read it is also a semi-encyclopedia which has an entry for "dialectical materialism," and one for "fermat's principle," in which it is careful to decapitalize Fermat at the head of the entry and recapitalize him within, adding the date of his death.

This new-style dictionary of the English language includes many foreign words other than those that have been naturalized into English—the unpronounceable *oeuvre,* for example. In such cases, which are relatively numerous, popular approval does not seem to function as the guardian at the gates. But then profession and performance are hard to match in a book so strangely conceived. I have shown that the criterion of spoken usage—"language is speech"—breaks down at the point where the thousands of many-syllabled scientific compounds irrupt and overrun the page. The same criterion is disregarded in the pronunciations offered after such words as are, in fact, spoken. For these pronunciations, given in a factitious phonetic alphabet, are widely deviated from by speakers of English. From Virginia to Texas, millions of people regularly produce in common words sounds that are unknown to this "international" dictionary of "the English language." The pronunciations that it does give are consequently an arbitrary norm for which observable reality gives dubious warrant.

On the plane of observation itself, this composite glossary is equally questionable in its reports. It grows garrulous about "ain't," saying: "though disapproved by many and more common in less educated speech, used orally in most parts of the U. S. by many cultivated speakers, esp. in the phrase *ain't I.*" This statement goes counter not only to my experience but also to that of a dozen "more educated" people whom I have asked. Except in the jocular mode, "ain't" is never used by those Webster calls cultivated. And one is brought up short by the introduction of these categories. Do they not violate the scientific-populist scheme? More or less educated to do what?—cultivated in what respect? Could it be "educated to speak well and write correctly? cultivated in the use of English words and grammatical forms?" No linguist ever answers such impertinent questions. The structuralist keeps saying that whatever choice and arrangement of words is "effective" is or will be good speech. The lexicographer, who eagerly records as alternative meanings of a word the misconceptions of the illiterate, repeats that any meaning can be attached to any sound, so why fuss as long as we manage to "communicate." But effectiveness is never gauged or defined, and the loss of distinctions, of precision, of elegance is never brought within the scope of "communication." It is mere taste—aesthetics no less.

This willful neglect puts language in a unique position, alien to science, art and nature too. We shore up the hills and contain the flooding streams, but we let language rip, recognizing nothing as error. The lexicographer would not tolerate error in the *scientific* vocabulary: use "absorb" for "adsorb" and he will pounce on you; no use pleading that the two words are so much alike. But use "connive" for "contrive," and he will applaud—the language is growing! It's alive and evolving! Growth apparently means making two words do the work of one: "fortuitous" and "fortunate"; "precipitous" and "precipitate"; "disinterested" and "uninterested"; "infer" and "imply"; "companion" and "cohort"; "complete" and "fulsome"; "difference" and "differential"; "elementary" and "elemental"—in short, a later Webster could probably cut in half the abundance of the old English vocabulary and no one would feel the differential.

The social forces and private emotions that promote this general decay, misnamed growth or evolution, are not peculiar to the English language and were not invented by the science-proud partisans of linguistic anarchy. English has in fact resisted longer than other modern European languages, such as French, perhaps because English was more elastic and hybrid to begin with. I cannot hope to give here a full view of

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the influences that have been undoing the work of the lettered generations. The triumph of the written word at the expense of oral traditions; the enlargement of the electorate; the establishment of public schools for all; the spread of specialism with its attendant jargons; the new pride of the common man, which makes him a pedant; the learned ignorance of technicians and tradesmen; the singular ideals and conventions developed by the press; the gigantic growth of advertising keeping pace with that of industry; the corresponding revolt against standardization, which incites everyone to be "himself" by defying good manners, to be "creative" by distorting language, and to flout the machine by revelling in symbol and metaphor—all these things and more that could be pointed to have played a part in the impoverishment that our language discloses about our life.

Webster's Third New International Dictionary of the English Language is thus the representation between covers of a cultural revolution. From its tendentious title—the work being neither Webster's nor international, and only now and then a dictionary—to its silly systems and petty pedantries, the book is a faithful record of our emotional weaknesses and intellectual disarray. It should contribute mightily to that healthful annihilation of a way of thought and feeling, to that *tabula rasa* from which new cultural movements spring. Meanwhile the book belongs in every "cultivated" reader's library of humor. I did not read every page, but at least once in every page that I read I laughed.

JACQUES BARZUN

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Home to Africa

SAUNDERS REDDING

THE STORY IS TOLD that when that flinty old scholar, writer and world traveler, Dr. W. E. B. DuBois, landed in Ghana in 1961, at the invitation of President Kwame Nkrumah, he lowered himself to his knees and kissed the mother earth of Africa. The story is probably apocryphal. It is hard to imagine DuBois doing anything so contrary to the character he has given himself—and the world has accepted—for three-quarters of a century. But when I raised this objection, the British high-echelon civil servant, who was returning to his post in Africa after home leave, and who claimed to have witnessed this act of obeisance, replied, "Ah, but Africa does some strange things to you people." Although I instinctively resented what struck me as condescendence in the phrase "you people," I did not dispute the assertion. I had heard other incredible stories of the transforming power of Africa, including some about "going native and taking to the bush." But as our plane banked into the approach pattern over Dakar, Senegal, all I really knew was that my curiosity about Africa was excited almost beyond tolerable measure. It had been excited before by other places and many people, and I hope it will be excited again; but this time it was different.

Africa had been a vague, troubling presence in my imagination for nearly as long as I can remember. Like most Americans of my generation, I had had the wrong learning about Africa, and, like most Negro Americans, had never felt any pride in what I had

SAUNDERS REDDING's extended visit to Africa last spring under the auspices of the American Society of African Culture was the inspiration for his present article. Mr. Redding, who is a member of the Editorial Board of THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR, is Johnson professor of creative literature at Hampton Institute. His books include *The Lonesome Road, An American in India* and *On Being Negro in America.*

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been uncritically taught to believe. Indeed, the opposite—which I think was probably intended. I was ashamed that Africans were rated the "lowest of the human species"; that once captured and sold into bondage, often by other Africans, "they took happily to slavery, as if it was their natural condition"; that they lived in mud huts, went naked and ate human flesh; and that Africa was the "white man's graveyard." So wasn't I glad that my ancestors had been brought from that "benighted land"—that "dark continent" —and I could enjoy the "blessings of civilization"? I could not then (say forty years ago), but I could now counter that question with another: what blessings?

Dakar was a refueling stop, and as we walked toward the dim-lit "In Transit" lounge, I turned to my wife. "Aren't you going to kiss the ground?" I said.

"At three o'clock in the morning!" A cool breeze was blowing off the ocean. We were moving with a sluggish stream of people, mostly white, and the language we heard was French. "Besides," my wife said, looking around, "what makes you think we're in Africa?"

"Well, it's a state of mind," I said.

We were joking of course, but both of us were right.

Nothing made me think of Africa until, at two-thirty in the afternoon, we reached Lagos, Nigeria. At our stop in Accra, which is the capital of the most African of black African countries, the sense of Africa I might have had was diluted by the presence of more Britishers than blacks at the airport. They were what is frequently pictured as the ubiquitous colonial-type Britisher—starched khaki shorts, pyramids of service ribbons pinned to the breasts of short-sleeved, belted tunics; ruddy cheeks, mustaches, slate-blue eyes; blond wives; and blond children tugging and yapping at darkskinned nannies. The scene at the airport brought back sharp memories of Poona, Nagpur and Jubbulpore. The sun dazzling on the low, louvered, cement buildings, the heat, the red dust powdering the foliage and rising in great funnel-clouds in the wind of prop wash—all of it might have been in the central plain of India in the dry season in the best days of the British raj.

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But black-skinned hostesses met the plane at Lagos; with a minimum of fuss black officials ushered us through customs; and policemen almost the color of their dark blue woolen shirts waved our car into the swollen tide of traffic moving cityward. Because our skins were pale to theirs, we were not Negroes, nor, for all the proof of passports, American. "Europeans" they called us, with the accent on the second syllable. And at dinner that night at the Mainland Hotel, it did not occur to the waiter to offer us the African menu. We ate European—potage du jour, brussels sprouts, Irish potatoes, English mutton, Danish pastry.

Nevertheless we were in Africa all right, and specifically in the capital of the largest independent country south of the Sahara. The African "summit meeting" was about to take place there, and almost the first African I met on his home grounds—a civil engineer with the hybrid name of James Wellington Ogu, educated at Rugby and Cambridge—noting that Africans had taken over the European hotels at least for the duration of the meeting, remarked that the whites had all but fled from "this new manifestation of the black man's concert and his will to power."

I think perhaps Mr. Ogu overstated it. The hottest, most humid weather had come; it was a good time for short leaves; and the inviting mountain heights of Jos were only a few hours away. So what one saw everywhere were proud black faces gleaming atop billowing rich robes, over the collar insignia of smart uniforms and above the tidy knots of ties tailored in Bond Street. What one heard were Yoruba, Ibo, Hausa, Swahili, and—oneself addressed —French and English. The native markets swarmed. Spotting "Europeans" a block away, slicksters sidled up to offer ivory beads, Swiss watches, German cameras. The main streets were gay with bunting and often shrill with the piping of uniformed school children marching four abreast to the rhythms of their own pure voices. Along the Marina the flag-draped portraits of the Heads of State of the Monrovia Powers looked sternly down on guards of honor, shining official cars and soldiers frozen at the gates of government compounds and at stations every fifty feet along the palm-lined thoroughfare.

The summit meeting, which was convoked with restrained

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enthusiasm and great dignity by Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, Prime Minister of Nigeria, did not resolve any of those problems that African leaders themselves call pressing. It did not level tariff barriers, or standardize African railroads, or decide on an intra-Africa monetary system. To certain biased, unofficial observers, including Afrikaners, Portuguese and a clutch of Sir Roy Welensky's bluster boys, it proved only that Africa is nations—and increasingly more of them. To such observers Africa is nations inevitably and "naturally" divided by ethnic groupings, by language and culture, by territorial boundaries and by socio-political alignments with various parts of the non-African world. It is true of course that Africa is Caucasoid and Negroid, Hamitic and Semitic. It is Coptic priest and pagan priestess; Moslem, Christian, Hindu and Animist. It is Portuguese exclave, the French Community, the British Commonwealth and the still undissolved Central African Federation. In short, Africa would appear to be an irresoluble clash and confusion of native and foreign values and the inherited prejudices of nearly all the nations of Europe, and one who looked to the summit meeting for proof of this might have thought he found it in the declination of the Casablanca Group (Ghana, Guinea, Mali, Egypt and Algeria) to attend, and Mr. Nkrumah's denunciation of the Monrovia Powers. But he would have been deceived I think, for the one thing the summit meeting seemed to make clear is that, in spite of diversity and all the appearances of fragmentation, Africa is nations committed and bound in spiritual congregation to the idea of Pan-Africa.

It is not quite the old idea, for with the emergence of the independent Arab States north of the Sahara, it has taken on new political dimensions. As a political idea, it had not been conceived twenty-five years ago, and what it means to Bourguiba, King Hassan and Ben Bella is something quite different from what it meant then. As a political idea, Pan-Africa faces problems that Europe has failed to solve in all the years of on-again off-again effort since Napoleon. It envisions nothing less than what has been variously called a United States of Africa, a Concert of Africa and a Parliament of Africa. In deference to this, the new constitution for Morocco, overwhelmingly approved just recently, plays down Arab

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unity and declares that Morocco will have among its prime objectives "the realization of African unity." Surely, too, Ethiopia's and Tunisia's membership in the Monrovia Group of states, which are all but solid black, and Morocco's and Algeria's membership in the Casablanca Group—also all but solid black—have the same objective and meaning—that is, the political union of the African continent.

But the evidence available to an American Negro visitor to sub-Sahara Africa suggests that this may be the least of the meanings in that region where the concept of Pan-Africa is deeply involved with the idea of race—the black race. It is an emotional involvement that confuses recent history and confounds political thought. One cannot avoid the feeling of unhappy ambivalence that is provoked when in the same speech Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, Governor-General of Nigeria, says, "Take the individual prophets of Pan-Africanism and it will be found that in all cases they are ethnocentric in their ideas and concepts of Pan-Africanism. . . . When Edward Wilmot Blyden . . . preached the projection of the African personality he had at the back of his mind the black inhabitants of Africa. The same may be said of . . . Burghardt DuBois of America, Mojola Agbebi of Nigeria, Jomo Kenyatta of Kenya, Javabu of South Africa . . . Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, and Leopold Senghor of Senegal. . . ." That, and then this:

"My considered views are that Pan-Africanism has come to stay, and . . . it will yet be a shining example to the rest of the world how people of different races, divergent cultures and diversity of languages can live together in political unity in one continent. . . . Not being a seer, I can only prophesy that . . . Pan-Africanism is destined to be feasible. . . ."

Destined to be feasible! Whether a bright hope or a desperate, who can say? And who can say whether the apparent race bias of President Nkrumah's struggle for black Africa's "regeneration—politically, socially, economically—within the milieu suited to the . . . communal pattern of African society," which is "the foundation of Pan-Africanism," is corrected by the Casablanca Group, which Nkrumah himself called into being? There is little to wonder at but much to understand that out of an overwhelming emotional

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need, unsatisfied for half a millenium, "offices of Africanization" are set up and staffed, ethnic symbols and myths are ever more viable, Western cultural authority courageously challenged and the prestige of whiteness diminished everywhere in black Africa.

As an old idea, the associations that clung to Pan-Africa were ethnic, and, as Dr. Azikiwe's speech made clear, its prophets were ethnocentric. If it meant—as it certainly did—Africa for black Africans, it also meant hope in black Africa's future and a resurrection—no, a new birth—of pride in its past. As an old idea, Pan-Africa had been made respectable to me by my experience as a Negro in America. Long before African intellectuals of the stature of Leopold Senghor and Alioune Diop elaborated it, and the West Indian poet Aimé Césaire refined out of it the mystique *negritude,* and Nkrumah gave it fresh utterance at the All-African People's Conference in 1958, and long, long before Elijah Poole, the American Negro who now calls himself Elijah Muhammad, screamed it as a battle cry for mindless, violent-tongued revolutionaries to echo and gather to, Pan-Africa was an assertion of the common cultural heritage of all black men—which, as I saw it, certainly included me. Since a cultural history is proclaimed everywhere to be the unassailable testimonial to the dignity and worth of a people, and since by definition I was excluded from the cultural heritage that should have been mine by right of birth, Pan-Africa was the door through which fulfillment gleamed.

Yet so frustrating and divisive was the learning of my youth, and so charismatic the projection of the American dream, when that door was opened at the All-African Writers Conference in Uganda last spring, I could not enter through it.

Of the black African writers most likely to be known to the West, only Leopold Senghor, Peter Abrahams and the ailing and aging Amos Tutuola were missing. Chinua Achebe, Ezekiel Mphahlele, Gabriel Okara, Wole Soyinka, Amadou Samb, Bloke Modisane—thirty-two in all, representing the finest writing talent in Africa, were there. There were four Americans, and of the several British at least four were publishers or publishers' representatives. Including the poet Langston Hughes, who is Negro, and

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the novelist Robie Macauley, who is the editor of the *Kenyon Review,* we Americans were guests, and our participation in the conference was appropriately low-keyed. The British had a somewhat different status, difficult to explain but supported by the fact that they were there on business. They were scouting the conference for publishable manuscripts, and they were prepared to announce that a group of publishers—British and American—would sponsor a competition for the best novel by a black African on an African theme.

Knowledge of this, however, was a well-kept secret. It was to be the *pièce de résistance* of the cultural feast, to come as a surprise in next to the last plenary session. Having been let in on it in strict confidence, I had three or four days in tingling expectation of a joyous reaction, almost as if the competition was a project devised of my own thoughtful generosity. Many of the sessions had been taken up with questions—more complex and more passionately discussed than I make them seem now—of the African writer's audience, which is limited, and the cold indifference of the non-African world to Africa's literary aspirations. The announcement, I thought happily, would be the satisfaction of a real complaint. I rather expected a spontaneous cheer.

But I was mistaken in supposing that the silence that followed was the speechlessness of ecstasy. The dark, sensitive, intelligent faces, over which I had watched animation play for nearly a week, were immobile and impassive. The silence was a challenge to a code I had learned so thoroughly that I had ceased to think of it. I did not know the depth and substance of my African friends' pride. I had been taught that at the very least one should look thankful for even gestures of small favors from an all too casual and perfunctory white world. I looked toward Langston Hughes, but he was far down the table, and opposite me Robie Macauley's head was lowered, and I could not see his face. Plainly, though, the publishers were puzzled, and I guessed hurt, by this indifference to their charitable intentions.

It was not quite indifference. Someone asked a question: When did the competition open? Close? There were other questions—neutral, routine products of politeness. Gradually, however, I

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could sense a subterranean flow of thought and feeling I could not guess. Then:

"Who will judge this competition?" The answer was that since they, the publishers, were primarily interested in a non-African audience, the judges would be non-African. Suddenly all the writers were talking at once. I will not try to relate all that was said, for, indeed, I cannot; but the gist was this:

It is all very well for European publishers to establish a rich prize for us Africans to compete for—and we thank them—but what are these publishers' expectations? Essentially non-African. Perhaps they do not understand the insidiousness of this. Our standards, reflecting our own values and ideals, are different from theirs, and until they accept our standards we can have no pride in our accomplishments as Africans and no hope that the dignity of black men is recognized. Although colonial despotism has forced us to use their language, our standards of expressiveness are different from theirs. Our imaginations work differently from theirs, and are not inspired by the same realities. They make certain assumptions about experience that we do not make, nor ever will make. They would have us disregard the new political sanctions that have come with independence and that encourage black artists and writers to be creative according to the standards and tastes of our own people. Will competing for this prize assure our cultural rebirth? Indeed, will it not have the opposite effect? And if this is not a hazard, who are the Europeans to judge us by our own standards and expectations? If it is their mind to favor us, then let it be on our own terms. Let them know that African nationalism, the African personality and *negritude* are adequate to inspire black writers and artists with themes and to creative works justified by the authority of a black audience. Let us define our own genius!

Stated with a blunt eloquence of passion that I have completely failed to convey, this was the argument. This was Pan-Africa both in spirit and in word. There was no discourtesy in it—no fleer of sarcasm, no intentional, sharp anger of reproof. It was simply triumphant, and it moved its darkskinned audience to triumphant cries of "Hear! Hear!" and to surges of spontaneous applause that were not meant to be a reproach to an American Negro guest's

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pallid conception of his Negro-ness. I felt small, gutted, wretched. I was locked out of the brotherhood of blacks by the terms used to define the black brotherhood. Confronted by this palpable African presence, I was neither American nor black: I was no one. America had not made me real in the sense that Africa had made real the men my elbows touched on either side. They were substance. I was shadow. The African Personality and *negritude* were no longer a myth compounded by a mystique.

Again my eyes stole toward Langston Hughes, but I still could not see his face. Across from me Robie Macauley looked withdrawn and remote.

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The American Past
An Unsuspected Obstacle in Foreign Affairs

CARL N. DEGLER

INCREASINGLY, IT IS FASHIONABLE TO DISCERN A CONNECTION between our own successful revolt against colonial rule and the revolt against Europe that is the essence of the nationalist ferment in Asia and Africa. In the July, 1961, issue of *Foreign Affairs,* for example, Henry Wriston wrote: "Familiarity with our record will end much of the difficulty in understanding current revolutions. For 1961 is still a part of the Age of Revolution that was launched in 1776." Later in the same article he added, "Read aright, our Declaration of Independence makes us kin to all the new nations which escaped from the status of wards and attained the stature of independence." A year later, in the *Saturday Evening Post,* also coinciding with the anniversary of the nation's birth, Secretary of State Dean Rusk took up the same theme, observing that it was his "conviction that the ideas which inspired the American Revolution and have guided our national development are the most powerful forces at work in the world today." Since then, Alan Westin in the *New York Times Magazine* has made a similar connection between our history and that of the newly independent states of the world.

To be sure, there is some reason to see such an analogy. After all, our own revolution was the first colonial rebellion to succeed in modern times. But a closer inspection of the American past suggests that our experience is too special to be a guide to the life of other people; to suppose that what we did can be done by others simply because we did it, is to misread our history and, more important, to confuse our people and to misunderstand what is going on in the underdeveloped world.

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Take the example of our colonial revolution from Great Britain. On the surface it is a simple war for independence against the greatest power of the day. Viewed as such it appears strikingly similar to the Indian movement for independence or the Indonesian revolt against the Dutch. But once we probe beneath the surface the analogy quickly evaporates.

A salient feature of our Revolution was that its animating purpose was deeply conservative. The colonials revolted against British rule in order to keep things as they were, not to initiate a new era. The well-known argument of the colonists that they would not accept taxation without representation was not a demand for new liberties, but an appeal for the retention of rights long enjoyed and only recently taken away by a reinvigorated British government's efforts to impose a tax on stamps and later on tea. Indeed, the whole revolutionary decade from 1765 to 1776 can be viewed as a conservative response of the colonials to the British government's various schemes for dealing in a new and more rational way with the governance of its empire now that the French had been successfully ejected from North America. Anyone who runs through the colonial protests of those years cannot help being impressed by their underlying similarity: Let us return to the ways of government known before 1760 when there were none of the objectionable taxes, laws and interferences by Britain in the affairs of the colonies. What the colonials hoped for was a restoration of those years of "salutary neglect," as Edmund Burke named them.

The demand for independence came only reluctantly and after years of trial and agitation and when the imperial purpose of the British seemed incapable of being turned aside in any other fashion. As late as July 6, 1775—two months after the fray at Concord and Lexington—the Continental Congress officially denied "any designs of separation from Great Britain and establishing independent states." We have taken up arms, the Congress carefully explained, "in defense of the freedom that is our birthright, and which we ever enjoyed til the late violation of it. . . ." That same reluctance to move to revolution was remembered by John Adams over a half-century later. "That there existed a general desire of independence of the crown, in any part of America before the Revolution," he

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wrote in 1821, "is as far from the truth as the zenith is from the nadir. For my own part, there was not a moment during the Revolution, when I would not have given every thing I ever possessed for a restoration to the state of things before the contest began, provided we could have had any sufficient security for its continuance." As Adams implied, prior to the 1760's British rule was unobjectionable. The Declaration of Independence itself testifies to this, for the "crimes" of George III listed therein are those of the preceding ten years. Nothing was said about the rest of the century and a half of British rule.

What analogy can there be between this history and that of the newly independent peoples? There was in America no long-drawn-out, underground independence movement as in India under Ghandi or in Ghana under Nkrumah. Independence became a goal for Americans only as a *"dernier resort,"* as Washington was fond of saying. The men who pushed the American Revolution were not nationalists compelled to spend years in the jails of the colonial power, but political leaders seeking only to continue their free governments as they knew them all their lives. Fully three-quarters of the men who signed the Declaration of Independence held office under the Crown before the Revolution and under the state governments immediately after the Revolution. What other colonial country today can show a similar degree of continuity of leadership across the chasm of its revolution for independence?

More is at stake here than simple historical accuracy. Our whole conception of what a revolution is and how independence is achieved has been shaped by our historical experience. It is true, of course, as has been pointed out by a number of commentators, that as a result of their own successful revolt Americans in the eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries were prone to welcome revolutions elsewhere. But the significant fact is that when these revolutions did not emulate the American pattern of quickly leading to orderly, democratic societies, American public opinion found these foreign revolutions disappointing, if not hostile. That was what happened with the French Revolution after 1793, with the Latin American revolts of the nineteenth century and with the Russian Revolution of 1917, to name only the most obvious. And

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it is happening today with the revolutions in Asia and Africa. Our revolutionary experience bears almost no resemblance to the turmoil and authoritarianism of the modern nationalist revolutions around the globe. Certainly there was violence against Tories and conflict among the chief economic groups during and after our Revolution, but the overriding social fact was that the transition from colonial status to independence was carried out smoothly and without any serious breakdown in political authority. In the course of a century and a half, during which they built their version of English representative government, Americans had learned how to operate a system of self-government and to put their trust in peaceful solutions to political problems rather than in violence or one-man rule. At the time of the Revolution, most white males were already a part of the political process, for if the latest scholarly studies of the colonial suffrage are to be believed—and I think they are —then at the very least a majority of white men voted and could participate in government years before Paul Revere made his famous ride. Probably most Americans, at least the males, could read and write at the time of independence; and probably most of them owned their own land. Thus, as a self-governing people before the Revolution, the Americans struck for independence in order to *retain* their freedom and to resist what they interpreted as British *intentions* of tyranny.

The colonial or newly independent peoples today, on the other hand, struggle for or cherish self-government as a new, albeit desirable, thing. For them the forms and practices of self-government are unfamiliar because of either lack of time to develop them or lack of opportunity to practice them. Happily they repudiate that past, looking expectantly toward freedom in the future. The American Revolution, to be sure, like many other great events, went beyond the intentions of those who started it, but between a revolution that is intended to overthrow the past and one that is intended to perpetuate it lies the vast gulf between a radical and a conservative habit of mind.

Because the American people know that their own transition from colonial to independent status was achieved with no serious interruption in government and politics, they are understandably

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confused and annoyed to see Asians and Africans unable to make as untroubled a shift. Told that the new nations are going through much the same experience as that through which Americans passed in the eighteenth century, they cannot help but expect similar results to follow. That the same desirable results do not follow, either smoothly or otherwise, is not because of deficiencies in the Asians, Africans or South Americans, but simply because the American Revolution was so different an event from those in other colonial regions. Americans during their revolutionary decade, it has often been pointed out, argued for the rights of Englishmen; who has ever heard the Algerians plead for the rights of Frenchmen? Certainly the peoples of Spanish America in their colonial revolts did not ask for the rights of Spaniards. In that difference is measured the divergence between our Revolution and those of other colonial peoples yesterday and today.

Furthermore, contrary to the impression given by public figures today, our revolutionary fathers were not so sure that the American Revolution was exportable or reproducible. John Adams and Thomas Jefferson, for example, in their famous correspondence during their declining years, agreed that even new countries like the newly independent republics of South America were not fit for either free government or independence. "I enter in all your doubts as to the events of the revolution of South America," Jefferson wrote to Adams in 1818. "They will succeed against Spain," he correctly prophesied. "But the dangerous enemy is within their breasts. Ignorance and superstition will chain their minds and bodies under religious and military despotism. I do believe it would be better for them to obtain freedom by degrees only. . . ." Both men continued to harbor such doubts up to the close of their lives in 1826.

Another analogy often made between the history of the United States and the newly emergent nations is that America began as an underdeveloped country, successfully making the transition to industrialization without government controls or interference with individual initiative. Therefore, it is argued, if Americans could do it in the past, then these new nations can today. Why, then, many Americans today ask in rising anger, do these nations need foreign

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aid, why do they lean so sympathetically toward socialistic measures and state intervention in economic affairs?

Again the answer must be that the analogy is wrong. It is true that in the early years of the Republic the United States was largely agrarian in economy, deceptively similar in character to those traditional societies now emerging into statehood. But the United States was an agricultural society in which the ratio between man and land was low. "Here every one may have land to labor for himself," Jefferson pointed out in 1813. Sometimes the land speculator made the acquisition of land more difficult or more expensive than might otherwise have been the case, but as early as 1820, an eighty-acre piece of land could be purchased from the government for one hundred dollars. In a nation where most men were landowners, few Americans had to contend with landlords or moneylenders, as has been the case with Indians crowded upon their tiny plots in Bengal and the Oudh. And when they did, as in New York State in the 1830's and 1840's, the force of the rest of society supported the overthrow of feudal encumbrances.

Moreover, the American land was fresh, often rich and ready to yield ample crops. As a result, from the beginning of the nation food and raw materials for export were always abundant. Early in their careers on the land, men produced a surplus for sale to support a growing urban and, later, industrial population. What a contrast this is with the poor, worn-out soil of much of Africa south of the Sahara, where a surplus is difficult for the most vigorous farmer to come by. It is true that in many of the underdeveloped countries, like India or Indonesia, the yields *per acre* are far higher than Americans have ever achieved. But the yields *per man* are discouragingly low because the labor is unassisted by adequate tools, machines, good seeds or fertilizer—or even by healthy manpower. And it is yields per man that determine whether labor can be released from agriculture for other tasks.

An American in the early nineteenth century, as a result of his own hard labor, could accumulate a surplus, even buy more land (and, if he lived in the South, more slaves) and greatly improve his material position in his own lifetime. The thirty-eight million immigrants who entered the United States between 1820 and 1930

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were living testimony to the belief in and the actuality of the opportunity. The immigrants came also because wages were high in the United States, for in the new country there was a chronic, if variable, shortage of labor. High wages in turn encouraged a rising rate of productivity through the use of machines and labor-saving devices on farms and in factories. (Even slave labor was too expensive at times and so Yankee ingenuity and Southern profit-seeking combined to produce a cotton gin.) In the new nations of the world, the two great problems that inhibit economic growth are low agricultural productivity and a high ratio of men to the land. America in its rise to economic abundance has not had to contend with such difficult obstacles.

One can carry the story further into the era of industry. As agricultural productivity rose, more men could be spared from farming to serve in the industrial labor force in the expanding cities. The very prosperity of the countryside meant that an internal market for manufactures was already in being. Furthermore, the generally high wages in the cities—as compared with contemporary Europe, to say nothing of Asia, Africa and South America today—provided a still better and wider market for manufactures in the urban centers by the close of the century. Obviously the story of the American transition from agriculture to industry is more complex than can be described here, but it is evident that the circumstances that brought that transition about are largely absent from the underdeveloped countries of the world today.

There is a further reason why the economic growth of the United States offers few analogies for the new nation. One of the consequences of the abundance of natural resources was that the nation could afford to leave economic activity up to individual initiative, with all that that meant in offering a powerful incentive to production. A less well-endowed society could not have afforded to give free rein to the individual, for, as is evident in American history, individual enterprise is often rather free and easy in its use of national resources. Waste, contrary to Vance Packard, is not an invention of modern Americans. From the very beginning of our history foreign travelers have commented upon the slovenly agriculture of Americans. In the South of the eighteenth century, one historian

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has written, "Planters bought land as they might buy a wagon—with the expectation of wearing it out." Even in New England where good land was hard to come by, staunch defenders of the region like Timothy Dwight in 1821 had to admit that "the husbandry of New England is far inferior to that of Great Britain." In a country so richly endowed, the federal government itself could afford, literally, to give away the national domain, as it did through the Homestead Act and the grants to the railroads, in an effort to spur individual economic enterprise.

In America, this dependence upon Adam Smith's "hidden hand" worked out tolerably well, for in general the individual enterpriser, pursuing his own enrichment, did in truth enrich the nation. In time, of course, the country found that dependence on individual enterprise begat social as well as economic evils, so that railroad regulation, banking reform, conservation measures and regional planning, like the T.V.A., were introduced. But by then the industrial machine was built.

Such a casual approach to national wealth and the labor force is not possible in a nation in which resources are limited—or already partly exhausted by the colonial power—and the pressure of population upon the land is already intense. In such a society some system of economic priorities has to be set up if the shift from a traditional, agricultural society to industrialization and a market economy is to be made. Hence in almost all of the newly independent states, the government will, or has already, thrust a strong hand into the economic process. (Even in the United States, the government found it necessary, at times, to take action itself if certain economic tasks were to be completed. The building of the Erie Canal by New York State and the aiding of transcontinental railroad construction by the federal government came about because private enterprise proved too cautious or too timid to undertake what the national economic interest required.) Therefore, in these new countries a decided interest in state capitalism or some variant of socialism is to be expected.

With so many nations turning to socialism or planning, Americans find their own history a poor guide to the world. Historically, socialism is the doctrine of the working class in an industrial society.

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But the irony of history is that the United States, as the most thoroughly industrialized country on the globe, has never experienced a significant socialist movement. The reasons are too lengthy to go into here; the important point is that socialism is an alien and unfamiliar phenomenon to most Americans. At best it seems an unnecessary interference with liberty of enterprise and a violation of the proper role of the state as our history has defined that role for us. Even in the days of the New Deal and the modern welfare state, the idea that the government should own enterprises and be an employer of industrial labor on a large scale has had no basis either in fact or in the aspirations of the great majority of Americans. Furthermore, with no socialist party of any significance in the United States, the working class lacks that belief in government ownership of the means of production that is so widely accepted in countries that have a strong socialist political tradition.

This absence of a visible socialist movement in the United States affects not only our understanding of the newer nations of the world who seem to be heading in the direction of some kind of state enterprise and control, but it also makes us wary of the older, already industrialized nations of the world, like England, France and Japan, to name only a few, all of which have socialist parties of importance. Indeed, no matter where Americans turn, toward the old or toward the new nations of the world, socialists abound, for, in point of fact, socialism is usually a natural outgrowth of a people's wrestling with the problems of industrialization. We need to recognize that our lack of experience with socialism reduces our understanding of or insight into the world as it is, although it easily misleads us into thinking what the world *should* be.

If our history is a poor guide for understanding the world today, it is also an obstacle to the world's understanding of us. Self-righteous Northerners too often assume that the subordination of the Negro in American culture is an unfortunate, but largely Southern phenomenon, not typical of our society as a whole. To any objective observer, though, it is evident that throughout history, down to the present, the black man has been a problem for white Americans, north as well as south of Mason's and Dixon's line. For a long time

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in our history, because the Negro was a slave, the question of his proper place in society was ignored. But even as Northerners argued against slavery in the South in the years before the Civil War, it was evident that opposition to slavery did not mean that the black man was accepted as an equal with the white. Lincoln himself, although a staunch foe of slavery, admitted in his debates with Douglas in 1858 that "I have no purpose to introduce political and social equality between the white and black races. There is a physical difference between the two, which, in my judgment, will probably forever forbid their living together upon the footing of perfect equality; and inasmuch as it becomes a necessity that there must be a difference, I, as well as Judge Douglas, am in favor of the race to which I belong having the superior position. . . . I agree with Judge Douglas," he added, that the Negro "is not my equal in many respects—certainly not in color, perhaps not in moral or intellectual endowment."

As President and just before he made public his preliminary Emancipation Proclamation, Lincoln met with a group of free Negroes to encourage them to emigrate to Central America. In the course of his remarks, he made clear his belief that white and black Americans could not live together as equals. Typically, Lincoln began his talk by getting to the central question of why Negroes should leave the country of their birth. "You and we," he said, "are different races. We have between us a broader difference than exists between almost any other two races. Whether it is right or wrong I need not discuss, but this physical difference is a great disadvantage to us both, as I think your race suffer very greatly, many of them living among us, while ours suffer from your presence. In a word, we suffer on each side." He went on to say that slavery and the Negro were the cause for "our white men cutting one another's throats" in civil war. "But for your race among us there could not be war, although many men engaged on *either* side do not care for you one way or the other."

After slavery was abolished, the question of the Negro's place in a white man's country troubled Americans for decades and it still does, both in the North and in the South, although today the constitutional basis for the equality of the Negro is more widely

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accepted than at any time in our history. The point being made here should not be misunderstood. There is no question that ever since the Fourteenth Amendment, at least, the ideals of America as enshrined in our great documents stand for equality for all men, without distinction of race or color. But that principle is not yet a matter of practice today, any more than it has been throughout our history.

Because our society is working to close the gap between principle and practice, we feel the world should understand our history and therefore excuse our shortcomings in the matter of race relations. Here the shoe is on the other foot, for we find that our history has limited us, as the history of other peoples prevents them from emulating our political stability and our economic growth. Moreover, to most Americans our history appears to be a valid if unfavorable explanation for the subordination of the black man. Was not Tocqueville correct when he ascribed to the long history of slavery the discriminatory behavior white Americans adopt toward Negroes? "Among the moderns," Tocqueville wrote in *Democracy in America,* "the abstract and transient fact of slavery is fatally united with the physical and permanent fact of color. The tradition of slavery dishonors the race, and the peculiarity of the race perpetuates the tradition of slavery. . . . Thus the Negro transmits the eternal mark of his ignominy to all his descendents; and although the law may abolish slavery, God alone can obliterate the traces of its existence." Certainly the long history of slavery helps to explain the peculiarly American attitude toward the Negro. Furthermore, Americans are surely right in thinking that European superiority about our racial problem is unjustified simply because no European people has tested its alleged lack of racial bias under circumstances similar to those in the American past—that is, with large numbers of Negroes reared in slavery. Indeed, now that substantial numbers of West Indian Negroes, congregating in London, are arousing hostility from whites, Englishmen can no longer be sure that their vaunted lack of racism is any more than lack of opportunity.

But in entertaining such thoughts, Americans usually overlook the examples of peoples who do have a history of receiving without discrimination a large number of Negroes into their culture. Negro

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slaves, after all, made up a large part of the population of several of the countries of Latin America. Brazil, for example, has a history of slavery longer than ours, but for a variety of reasons this has not resulted in the kind of discrimination against the Negro that has been taken as a matter of course in the United States. On the contrary, the races in Brazil have mingled intimately, publicly and privately. Even during the nineteenth century under slavery, the free Negro in Brazil and elsewhere in South America attained governmental and ecclesiastical posts that were often of an eminence not yet achieved by Negroes in the United States today. Cuba, as Castro has not hesitated to remind us, is a conspicuous example of a society where the Negro has been accepted as an equal. In fact, General Batista, whose government Castro overthrew, is a Negro. Other Negroes as well have played important roles in the life of Cuba in the past.

Thus when the newly emergent peoples of the world, nearly all of whom are colored, criticize the American attitude toward the Negro, they are doing more than merely objecting to the treatment they might receive here. They are objecting to our history; they are finding in us a deficiency that is not in the nature of man but in the nature of our history. It might, after all, have been different. Therefore, despite all our good intentions and regardless of the correctness of the Supreme Court's decisions, our slowness in eradicating racial discrimination is as difficult for the colored peoples of the world to understand as their political and economic backwardness is for us.

There is yet another burden that the past places upon Americans in confronting the world of the mid-twentieth century. Leaders in a contest of global dimensions are expected to have a philosophy, an ideology, for by having one they can make their aims clear and they can attract followers. America, though, as Daniel Boorstin has pointed out, lacks an ideology. The new life and new ways of thought that Americans like to think they brought into being on this continent are the result not of plan or ideology, but of circumstances. As the example of the Revolution reminds us, Americans look to a political utopia in the past, not in the future. We talk of progress in material things, but rarely do we talk of political pro-

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gress, although we frequently lament the sorry decline in the level of our political behavior. In Walter Lippmann's *The Public Philosophy,* for example, he lamented our departure from what he considered the golden age of political discourse in the eighteenth century.

The whole structure of our political life is pragmatic and without plan. Our political parties have always been collections of diverse interests and only by the greatest of effort have historians and political scientists been able to find differences between them. Indeed, as Louis Hartz has shown, both parties historically have drawn their principles from the same pool of liberal ideas. As a government, we have dealt with problems as they came up and without any regard to logic or preconceived ideology. Thus when canals were needed to open the Ohio valley and the Middle West, we did not hesitate to let the state governments build or help to build them, although at the same time we talked of individual enterprise as the motive force in the economy—and it was, too. More recently, resolutely rejecting socialism as a political faith, we nevertheless set up, and retained under both parties, public power projects because the progress of the country seemed to require them.

Significantly, our great statements of political purpose have come into existence as a result of dealing with specific problems, peculiar to our history. Compare, for example, our Declaration of Independence—incidentally, the most cosmopolitan of all our great documents, for it was intended as a justification to the world—with the Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen that emanated from the French Revolution. Our declaration is an indictment of a specific government—actually a single man, George III—at a definite time in history. So tied to circumstances and time is it that no one, except students of the Revolution, ever reads the main part, which is a list of George's crimes. That main part says nothing to men in different times and different places. The French declaration, on the other hand, was a statement of intention, of goals for Frenchmen and, by easy extension, of goals for all men who lived under an absolutist state. It is not accidental that it became the model for the liberal state in the revolutions of the nineteenth century.

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For another example take the greatest of American political treatises, *The Federalist* of Hamilton, Madison and Jay. Its historical interest and importance for Americans are immense, for in it the Constitution at the formative stage is expounded by men of exceptional political acumen. But it says little to men elsewhere who may be dealing with problems of government and constitutions. *The Federalist* is too specific, too wrapped up in the special nature of the American situation. Even Madison's perceptive essay Number Ten, which Charles Beard once tried to make into a precursor of Marx's economic interpretation of history, is, in fact, an explanation of why the United States did *not* fit the scheme of a general theorist like Montesquieu. (It had been Montesquieu's thesis that a republic was impossible in a large country and Madison tried to show that the breadth of the thirteen colonies actually nullified Montesquieu's objections.) Similar limitations are to be found in the well-known Lincoln-Douglas debates; they are important for Americans, but no one reads them for their general principles; in fact, there are no general principles to be derived from the debates, as, for example, one finds in Burke's *Reflections on the French Revolution*. What Tocqueville recognized as true over a century ago still holds. "The spirit of Americans is averse to general ideas; it does not seek theoretical discoveries. Neither politics nor manufactures direct them to such speculations; and although new laws are perpetually enacted in the United States, no great writers there have hitherto inquired into the general principles of legislation. The Americans have lawyers and commentators but no jurists; and they furnish examples rather than lessons to the world." There still is no book or treatise by an American comparable in intention, much less in reputation, to Montesquieu's *Spirit of the Laws,* Rousseau's *Social Contract,* or Locke's great treatises on government. Indeed, the two most incisive statements of our central tendency as a polity and society have been written by foreigners, Tocqueville in the 1830's and Bryce in the 1880's.

The American political tradition, rich as it is, is overwhelmingly pragmatic and conservative. It keeps what works as long as it works, regardless of how illogical an institution or a device it may be. The Electoral College is a case in point. Designed as a means for keeping

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the selection of the President out of the hands of the masses, the Electoral College today is defended by liberals as a support to the underrepresented urban regions in national elections!

Perhaps the most obvious example of a distinctively American idea is the principle of separation of church and state. As an idea in the late eighteenth century, it was revolutionary. No Western state in almost two thousand years had dared to rule without the support of the church and no state had dared to leave the church unsupported by the political power. And although we rigidly adhere to it as if it were an ideology—how else is one to explain our refusal to send a representative to the Vatican or to take a religious census—it, too, is more pragmatic than it appears. On its face, the doctrine prohibits any support of religion by the state, yet our Presidents proclaim religious holidays like Thanksgiving; our states support churches and religious schools by tax exemption at the same time that they are forbidden to permit prayers to be said in the classroom. Children may be released from school ahead of time for religious instruction, but only if that instruction takes place outside public property. The states may and do provide textbooks and buses to children attending religious schools, and the armed forces and the Congress maintain chaplains. In short, our principle of separation of church and state exhibits little of that internal consistency that any respectable ideology should. And the reason is that Americans do not think ideologically but pragmatically. Because they believe that religion is a good thing, they like to see it supported by their democratic government; yet they also believe that the mixing of religion and the state is divisive and ultimately destructive of religious freedom. Hence they have evolved this inconsistent but eminently workable compromise, leaving it to the Supreme Court to patch it up from time to time to keep it functioning.

A couple of years ago, in the depths of despair over the gains being made by the ideology of Communism, *Life* magazine and *The New York Times* commissioned a number of prominent Americans to articulate the national purpose. The results were disappointing. A similar effort by the President's Commission on National Goals also failed to strike fire at home or abroad. Such efforts at spelling out what America stands for, whoever is commissioned to undertake the task, are doomed to failure on at least two counts.

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For one thing, such efforts are too ideological for most Americans to accept; they smack of the European penchant for theory and manifestos that we distrust so much. Besides, as we have seen, the amorphous, inconsistent American way just does not fit into so neat a package. Nor, obviously, can such efforts say much to non-Americans.

The fact is that we have no ideology, for by definition an ideology is capable of being made universal. Our peculiar history cannot be spelled out, attractively packaged and sold to people with a quite different historical experience. In this respect we are at a grave disadvantage in the world struggle of ideas with Communism. Communism, after all, was designed as an ideology and only later was forcibly adapted to the circumstances and uses of a single country, or, more recently, several countries. Here, too, our history has been of no help.

It has often been observed that, from the time of the first Puritans down to the days of the New Frontier, Americans have been a people with a sense of mission. But the mission has been neither a proselytizing nor an aggressive one. Each of our forays into imperialism has been attended by strong reservations on the part of large minorities of the population. This was true at the time of the Mexican War; it was true after the Spanish-American War. Indeed, the burden of the anti-imperialist argument in 1898 was that the newly conquered peoples like the Puerto Ricans and the Filipinos could not adapt to our peculiar institutions. (Usually the argument was put less charitably and delicately than that; it was said that darkskinned Catholics were not equal to the high demands of Anglo-Saxon, Protestant American customs.) And in a short time —as empires are wont to do—we relinquished the Philippines. Even when we have engaged in imperialist ventures, as in Central America and the Caribbean, our aim has never been to carry our way of life to the heathen, so to speak, as it has been for the French and to a lesser extent for the British. We have been content merely to send in the Marines, establish order and redeem the defaulted bonds. With the culture we had little to do. In short, the Puritan ideal of a city upon a hill—setting an example for all, but making no effort at conversion of the Gentiles—has been our model.

Despite the rhetoric of Tom Paine and a few other enthusiastic

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propagandists for support of the Revolutionary War effort, the founding fathers were convinced of the essential differences between America and the rest of the world. Writing to Lafayette in 1788, George Washington expressed his renewed belief in the special destiny of America now that a new constitution had been written. "You see," he wrote, "I am not less enthusiastic than ever I have been, if a belief that peculiar scenes of felicity are reserved for this country, is to be denominated enthusiasm. Indeed, I do not believe, that Providence has done so much for nothing." About the same time, from Paris, Jefferson exulted to his friend James Monroe on the differences between America and Europe. "My God!" he exclaimed, "how little do my countrymen know what precious blessings they are in possession of; and which no other people on earth enjoy. I confess I had no idea of it myself." He urged all Americans to see Europe, to better appreciate the United States and to learn "how much it is their interest to preserve, uninfected by contagion those peculiarities in their governments and manners, to which they are indebted for those blessings." America was so different from Europe, he told J. B. Say in 1804, that the principles in Say's treatise on economics because they were drawn from European experience might not be applicable in America.

Lincoln, echoing a remark of Jefferson's, called America the last, best hope of man. For most of the nineteenth century, the mission of America was what could be achieved here, not what could be exported to other peoples. If the downtrodden peasant of Central Europe or the unfranchised worker of a London slum wished to realize the dream for which America stood, he was not urged to reproduce America in his own country, but to come here. And does not this belief that America is unique, that the mission is to create the city on the hill help to explain that tendency of Americans to reproduce their home environment wherever they may be, whether it is Saigon, Berlin or Addis Ababa? If there is something arrogant and parochial about the behavior of Americans stationed in foreign countries, as we have been led to believe from books like *The Ugly American,* that is not accidental. Our sense of mission has also been arrogant and provincial.

There was a time, undoubtedly, when our awareness of the

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unique character of our history was tinged, if not suffused, with a sense of superiority. My purpose has not been to perpetuate that feeling; the object in emphasizing the unique features of the American past does not stem from any sense of arrogant pride. The aim has been quite different. In an age when America is a model for the whole world, it is important for us to remember that our history is irrelevant for most other peoples. If we do remember that then we will not expect other nations to follow our path and will save ourselves from disappointment arising out of misjudgment.

Frequently in our history the unique character of the American past was used as a support for isolation from the rest of the world. But that has not been my intention, either. No nation, least of all the United States, is an island unto itself in the present world. Nevertheless, the burdens that our peculiar history places upon us as an international leader should not be ignored, or, as some would try to do, speciously transmuted into assets. Our history has neither fitted us for nor warned us of the international role that now we play. In this restricted, if important sense, our history is a burden to us and irrelevant to the future of others.

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POEMS

MELVILLE CANE

Chancy Weather

The sparkle of this April afternoon
Has dwindled dull and sullen.
It looks like rain,
Indeed it may rain soon,
Those clouds are surely ominously swollen,
And yet,
A breeze may rise and puff them off again.

For here goes April with her chancy weather,
The skies obedient to her least caprice,
Whether she calls for sun or shower or whether
She teases them, uncertain of her choice.

The damsels scuttle down the avenue
A-click on spiky heels; they heed the threat,
They act before the fact, as damsels do,
Unfurl umbrellas to outwit the wet.

The non-existent wet. The menace thins,
Recedes, a hint of shine pokes through.
Umbrellas furled again as brightness wins,
The girls click on, along the avenue.

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Violets, Asparagus

Violets have sneaked into the asparagus bed
And mockingly taken over.

Who says they're modest and shy?

I find them shockingly brazen, ill-bred,
Rapacious,
Pernicious,
Ruinous, hateful and sly.

I can cope fairly well with clover
And the average run of weeds,
But gracious!
How that infernal genus breeds!

There's a time and a place for beauty,
But why this bed? Oh why
Must it choose to make this spot its own
Instead of a suitable mossy stone,
Half-hidden from the eye?

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No Need of Shade

October.

Feebler,
The sun has banked its fires;
A season, lost,
Expires.

No longer need
Of shade:
Now, to denude.

Invoke the midnight frost
Forthwith to shrivel and nip
And thoroughly, finally strip
Each branch, each bough.

Now elm and birch declare
Their prime anatomy,
Their essence, wintry-bare,
For all to see.

✪ MELVILLE CANE, lawyer and poet, is the author of *And Pastures New, Making a Poem, A Wider Arc* and *Bullet-Hunting and Other New Poems.* Mr. Cane's poetry has appeared many times in the SCHOLAR.

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What's Wrong with Graduate Literary Study?

LOUIS D. RUBIN, JR.

MR. R_____ H_____ IS TWENTY-FOUR YEARS OLD, a graduate of a Midwestern university, and his ambition is to teach literature and to write books. Last autumn he came to the small liberal arts college for women at which I teach, to enroll in a one-year master of arts program in creative writing, literary criticism and contemporary literature. He studied with William Golding, the British novelist who was our writer-in-residence last year, John W. Aldridge, a more or less permanent member of our English staff, and others. He read Proust, Joyce, Faulkner, Yeats, Eliot, he studied intensively in the forms of literary criticism, he was tutored in Shakespeare, literary archetypes, Milton. He had a wonderful time, and he was confirmed in his ambition to pursue literary study as a career.

To do that, however, he needed a Ph.D., so he enrolled in one of our major universities, a well-known school with a long tradition of graduate scholarship. He was awarded a teaching fellowship, and he looked forward keenly to his work.

What is Mr. R_____ H_____ doing now? His initial doctoral work consists, so he tells me, of a course in bibliography, in which he is learning how to recognize the variant printings of the letter "P" in Dickens's *Pickwick Papers,* so as to tell one edition of that work from another.

He hates it. He doesn't see what the variant spellings of words, the variant printings of letters, have to do with what he is interested in doing. "This bibliography, what is it?" he writes me.

The answer I must give him, alas, is the same that I must give to one of my best women undergraduate students who went eagerly

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off to graduate school at another great university and is now learning the parts of a seventeenth-century printing press: it is perhaps the most tedious of many tedious forms of grubbing inflicted upon young men and women interested in literature by a pedantic system of historically oriented graduate study which has in no essential way changed from the attempt by nineteenth-century German scholars to "dignify" literary study by approaching it as if it were a natural science that could be "verified" by phenomena. It is a thoroughly unimaginative and tedious curriculum, perpetuated from generation to generation by unimaginative and tedious people.

Not only is it of no real help to persons such as Mr. R_____ H_____, who has been encouraged hitherto to think of literature as something alive and important, but it constitutes a positive disservice. Under the misleading notion that the student is being taught "discipline" and "scholarship," the doctorate system in English literature as presently conceived actually stifles and kills the spontaneity and immediacy that the good student brings to his literary study. It takes a young man or woman of twenty-three to twenty-five years, filled with eagerness and vigor for the study of literature, and teaches this young person that the way to deal with it is to be as picayune, as unimaginative, as deadly and cumulatively dull as possible.

I am not talking merely about the introductory bibliography course; I am talking about the whole English Ph.D. system. I am talking about the kind of historically grounded academic regimen that buries its student in a mass of unimportant detail, inflicts upon him unwanted and unnecessary burdens of useless philological and historical knowledge, instructs him to suppress all effort at qualitative judgments and values of the literature he confronts, and tells him that the expression of excitement about poems and stories is the mark of an uninformed, immature mind.

Do I exaggerate? Of course. This is not true of the very best graduate instruction, by the very best graduate teachers—for first-rate people can make even the dreariest kind of intellectual regimen interesting and rewarding. But they do so, I insist, despite, not because of, our English Ph.D. system. They triumph over the system,

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and the system itself is essentially actively designed to thwart and even prevent any communication from teacher to graduate student of the excitement and enjoyment of literary study. I say "actively"; even that is granting too much, for the English Ph.D. system as it typically functions is passive, dead, inert, stifling. It is, in Yeats' phrase, "blear-eyed wisdom" born "out of midnight oil." Wisdom? Alas, no; pedantry, the accumulation of tedious detail, the ruthless suppression of form and order. Look at its products. Look at those it typically produces.

I wish to make it clear at the start that I have no objection whatever to historical scholarship. Properly and imaginatively conducted, it can serve and has often served as a greatly enriching aspect of literary study. I have done some historical scholarship myself, and I have enjoyed doing it. What I object to, then, is not historical study, but the idea, shared so far as I can tell by almost every graduate school in the country, that the *only* acceptable approach to graduate study is by way of historical scholarship, that only that which is historical is "scholarly," and that the primary object of the Ph.D. program in English literature (I use the phrase to include American literature, comparative literature and whatever else customarily comes within the purview of a graduate English department) is to produce trained historical scholars.

The time has long since passed when historical scholarship was considered the only worthwhile way to study literature; the New Criticism of the 1930's and 1940's helped to change that. Most scholars now admit that critical and thematic analysis of literature is a useful activity, and that the *Kenyon Review* is just as "important" an outlet for professional publication as *Modern Language Notes.* Yet curiously enough this admission has in no essential way served to modify the program of training for the young men and women who are to conduct that study. The typical graduate curriculum in English remains just about what it was thirty or forty years ago, so far as its requirements and expectations go. Individual teachers, individual courses, even individual dissertations, to be sure, have strayed off the old boundaries of historical research, but the graduate curriculum, and the attitudes toward the curriculum on the

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part of those who administer it, have changed very little. "Scholarship" is still interpreted primarily to mean historical scholarship, and this is what graduate students are principally supposed to do in graduate school.

The temperament that thrives best in graduate school, so far as I can tell, is typically the fact-grubbing, unimaginative, uncritical temperament, the kind of person who, with less intelligence, is to be found behind the counter of a bank, or in an automobile repair garage. It is this sort of person who *enjoys* graduate school, happily accepts the traditional pose of the graduate student as an apprentice monk straining his eyes by light of oil lamp to read and decipher medieval palimpsests. What about the young man who is interested in discovering meanings for himself rather than in uncritically assembling the meanings that others have discovered, who wishes to apply to the stories and poems he studies the full reaches of his critical intelligence?

My experience with such young men is that for them English graduate study is, except in rare instances, at best a rather boring and confining routine, and at worst a nightmarish torture of sensibilities and suppression of one's own thoughts and ideas. One is taught to parrot information, to search for what is unimportant and meretricious, to avoid anything not rigidly catalogable and footnote-able. It will be time enough when you get your course work done and your dissertation completed, one is told, to begin reading critically, to begin thinking about what the novels, poems and essays you have been dealing with might *mean*. Stick to the safe ground of research; don't deal with literature as literature.

The trouble is that when the graduate student finally completes his exhausting apprenticeship, he has become so deeply weighted down with the detail, so thoroughly brainwashed by the system, that he has forgotten why he once wanted to study literature. The excitement, the ardor, are all gone; in their place, often enough, is a pedant.

Why has this been necessary? In what way has the study, the writing about, the teaching of English literature been the beneficiary of what has happened to our once ardent young man?

The apologist for graduate education in English as it now exists

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will immediately produce a number of reasons: As presently constituted, he will say, the English Ph.D. achieves a number of objectives. First of all, it teaches the young would-be scholar how to use and explore the resources of the library, the repository of the wisdom of the past. Second, it teaches him the importance of exact, careful mastery of facts. Third, it gives him a familiarity with English language and literature from its very beginnings, so that he can understand the literature of the present better by the study of how the language got that way. Fourth, it teaches him that his field of chosen study is no mere impressionistic, subjective outpouring of emotion, but a stern and demanding discipline in a complex subject, requiring concentration, clear thinking, scholarly objectivity and industry. And fifth, after the young would-be scholar has been made acquainted with a variety of fields of literature, it permits him to select one field that he finds most compatible, and to undertake within that field an original inquiry, in which he makes his contribution to knowledge by the writing of a dissertation, thus demonstrating his ability to master and use a complex body of scholarly facts and ideas. This done, he is ready to venture forth on new work of his own, and to guide other young men and women in the same pursuit of knowledge.

A laudable course of training indeed. The only trouble with it is that typically it doesn't work out that way at all. Here is what actually happens.

1. "It teaches him how to explore and use the resources of the library." Surely this is placing the cart before the horse. What happens is that the graduate student is introduced to a bewildering assortment of reference tools, sources, collections and the like, without their serving any of the immediate needs of his interest in literature. His introduction to graduate literary study becomes a dryasdust tedium of mechanized, cumulative memorization of so-called "reference tools" and "research techniques." He is taught how to do research, without any attention to whether what he wants to do will involve research; without any attention, in fact, to whether he should *want* to do anything at all. For some kinds of literary study an exhaustive drilling in historical research is a necessity, but even then

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it would seem much more sensible to wait until our young scholar gets involved in something, and then to teach him how to conduct his researches in that. What does the young man who wishes to write a book about Herman Melville gain from being forced to study variant spellings in Elizabethan folios? Let him instead be instructed in the use of reference material within his own area of interest. The chances are not only that he will find it more informative and enjoyable, but that he will grasp the principles of research so much more firmly that, if he changes his mind later on and decides he does want to study Shakespearean folios, he will have a much better idea of how to go about doing it.

2. "It teaches the young, would-be scholar the importance of exact, careful mastery of facts." In practice this means that the young scholar is forced to fill his head with all manner of irrelevant historical data, the work of forgotten, third-rate minor authors, the accumulated paraphernalia of generations of fact-grubbers who cared nothing for literary work as imagination. Unrelated facts, biographical details, minor works by minor writers, tedious inquiries into the history of philosophical sources, are not literary inquiry, but adjuncts to literary inquiry. The young scholar can learn far more about what the poet William Shakespeare had to say about the mysteries of human existence by a reading of William Empson's essay entitled "They That Have Power" than from the late E. K. Chambers's ponderous two-volume collection of marginalia entitled *William Shakespeare: a Study of Facts and Problems*. Yet for every graduate student of Elizabethan drama who is given Empson's essay to read, I am sure that a dozen are instructed to familiarize themselves with Chambers's work. Certainly the Chambers work has its value: but only if the student, at a rather advanced point in his study, wishes to move out along certain specialized lines. My objection to the way in which graduate literary study is conducted is that in practice it glorifies the kind of work that the Chambers study emphasizes, while relegating to a very minor and subordinate place the kind of astute, imaginative, highly revealing approach to poetry that the Empson essay exemplifies. The Empson essay is not considered "scholarly," and therefore is not a fit document for graduate study. Yet it is Empson, and not

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Chambers, who is apt to be discussing the things that make Shakespeare worth reading.

3. "It gives him a familiarity with English language and literature from its very beginnings, so that he can understand the literature of the present better by the study of how the language got that way." In the first place, literature is not a philological process, but a collection of poems, stories and essays. One's appreciation of William Faulkner is in no vital way enhanced by a knowledge of medieval English. Faulkner did not write in medieval English. The fact that our present-day language evolved from an older language tells us next to nothing about the literature written in it today. There is nothing wrong with the study of Middle English for those who are interested in it, but it is a prerequisite for one field of inquiry only: Middle English and historical linguistics. By the time that any reasonably intelligent American is twenty-one years old, he possesses all the knowledge of his mother tongue that he will need to read Faulkner; what he still has to learn about Faulkner and about literature will not come from a study of Middle English.

The same is true of William Shakespeare. Certainly Shakespeare's language is closer to that of Alfred the Great than Faulkner's. But this is among the least important reasons why one reads Shakespeare. If the young scholar, upon reading Shakespeare, becomes fascinated with its philological problems, then and not until then is the time for him to undertake a course in Anglo-Saxon and Middle English. Yet most graduate schools regularly require such a course of all Ph.D. candidates!

An almost comic barbarity along this line is the insistence, at most institutions offering graduate training in English literature, that the student demonstrate a reading knowledge of German. This is a holdover from those nineteenth-century days when what went on in the German universities was the model for scholarly endeavor elsewhere. But today the greater part of the important German scholarship has been translated, and the time wasted by the graduate student in mastering (if that is the word for what a graduate student actually does to fulfill his language requirement) a difficult language could be far more profitably spent in reading the poems and stories that he came to graduate school to study. If his professional inquir-

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ies later prove to lead him in the direction of German scholarship, he may then, and not until then, familiarize himself with the language. But it is no more relevant to the study of most present-day English literature than is French, Spanish, Latin, Greek, Sanscrit or Choctaw.

4. "It teaches him that his field of chosen study is no mere impressionistic, subjective outpouring of emotion, but a stern and demanding discipline in a complex subject, requiring the utmost concentration, clear thinking, scholarly objectivity and industry." In practice, this means that the graduate student is soon taught that what he values most in literature, what attracted him to the study of literature, what makes literature worth reading in the first place, is not its imaginative ordering of experience, its insight into human conduct, but all of its nonliterary qualities—the social history of the times when the author lived, the history of the philosophical premises on which the author's values are based, the day-by-day events of the author's life, the books in the author's library, the evolution of the language in which the author wrote, the typographical shortcomings of the printer who first set the author's work in type and so forth. Instead of such matters being relegated to the periphery of literary study, to be used as specific occasion demands, they become the focus, the center.

The "utmost concentration" becomes not close, imaginative readings of poems and stories to see what it is they are saying, but the amassing of myriad peripheral details. "Clear thinking" means not thinking about the poem or novel before one, but the attempt to relate the work of literature to the history of philosophical systems; the actual images are made into the merest jumping-off places for excursions into the history of ideas—as if a poem's importance ever at any time lay in its contribution to the history of ideas! And as for "scholarly objectivity and industry," these become euphemisms for the belligerent avoidance of the imaginative properties of a work of literature, and the concentration of the student's efforts on those qualities that by their very nature are alien to intellectual excitement and involvement on the part of scholar or reader.

5. Finally, we are told that after the graduate student is "made acquainted with a variety of fields of literature," the graduate regimen

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"permits him to select one field that he finds most compatible, and to undertake within that field an original inquiry, in which he makes his contribution to knowledge by the writing of a dissertation, thus demonstrating his ability to master and use a complex body of scholarly facts and ideas." So many fallacies are involved in that idea that it would be difficult to enumerate them all. First, the quality of most graduate teaching is such that the student is emphatically not "made acquainted with a variety of fields of literature." Rather he is more often than not introduced to the particular research concerns of the professor in charge of the course, and is informed, for all intents and purposes, that graduate study in that area consists of whatever the professor is doing. If the professor happens to be writing a book on the history of a player's company in the late sixteenth century, the graduate student will find that the study of Elizabethan drama consists of historical inquiry into the economics of the acting profession in London during the last two decades of the 1500's. A general course on the dramatic literature of the Tudor period? That is what undergraduates do, not graduate students.

The graduate student makes the rounds of the various professors in the department, learns the particular interests of each and decides upon his dissertation topic, which customarily is "suggested" to him by the professor who is to direct it, and typically consists of a study of one of the specific problems in the professor's own professional work. If our graduate student decides, for example, to work in Elizabethan drama with the professor mentioned previously, he will very likely be set to work on a study of the handbills distributed by London acting companies from 1585 to 1600. He will be expected to produce an exhaustive analysis of who printed the handbills, how many copies were customarily run off, who distributed them, what names appear most often on them, what shifts in player company personnel are indicated by shifts of names and so forth. The result is, happily, unpublishable, although it will furnish several footnotes for the professor's own study, and perhaps the graduate student can assemble several small articles for publication in scholarly periodicals devoted to the minutiae of the period under consideration.

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As for the notion of an "original inquiry," that, it seems to me, is perhaps the most appalling thing about the whole concept of Ph.D. dissertation writing. For in practice it as often as not means that the student is supposed to select a topic so specialized and unimportant that even previous writers of dissertations have neglected it. It forces the student to devote his efforts not to major writers and major concerns, but to forgotten third-rate writers and minor problems. What, after all, can one say that is "original" about William Shakespeare any more? One had better devote his efforts to the drama of John Marston. Or if one insists on taking on Shakespeare, one devotes himself to tracing down the oblique references to court life in *The Tempest,* or the extent to which Shakespeare used certain travel accounts in describing the island of Setebos, or the variant spellings of certain geographical place names in the late plays from folio to folio, correlating them at all times with maps printed in London during the early seventeenth century. But alas, even such topics as these are all but exhausted nowadays; one must subdivide and narrow them down even more closely, in order to produce an "original inquiry" acceptable to the world of scholarship.

The point is, what have all these to do with the reasons why one reads Shakespeare? The notion that only an "original inquiry" must be offered as a doctoral dissertation serves to prevent the graduate student from coming to grips with those aspects that are most important about the work of the greatest of all English writers. What would happen, for example, to the student who proposed to devote his doctoral dissertation to a consideration of *The Tempest* as a poetic drama? In most graduate institutions he would be informed that such a topic was not only "far too broad," but "too vague" as well. Why not, his major professor might suggest if he happened to be especially enlightened in his approach to scholarship, compare the character of Caliban with those of other monsters in various Renaissance writings? That topic might be sufficiently limited and concrete to permit the student to make a "useful contribution to knowledge."

The doctoral dissertation, the graduate student will be promptly informed if he should dare venture to question the premises of

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graduate scholarship, is no place for general critical inquiry. Let the student first show his thorough grounding in a limited area of research; then after he has received his degree he can if he wishes move out into the broad expanses of imaginative interpretation.

But is this wise? Is it wise to take a young adult at the point when his ideas are likely to be most original and far-reaching, least hardened and set into rigid patterns, and force him to work exhaustively in a limited, narrow, minor field of inquiry, where the qualities that he has most to contribute to literary study are precisely those of least use? Swiftly the reply comes: "He must learn discipline, thoroughness, sound scholarship; he must learn to crawl before he can run." Ah, but since when, except in Ph.D. scholarship, must discipline mean only pedantry, thoroughness only an obsession with minutiae, sound scholarship merely an avoidance of imaginative inquiry? There is a difference between learning how to crawl, and being taught that crawling is the only accepted method of academic travel!

The question that I think needs to be asked about all this, and that almost never gets asked, is *Why*? What is the purpose of doctoral study in literature as it is presently conducted? What are its goals? What is it supposed to accomplish for the young men and women who must undertake it if they wish to teach and study literature on the college level? Why, in other words, must my former student Mr. R_____ H_____ undergo what he is now undergoing in order to prepare himself for a career in scholarly writing and teaching?

Certainly it does not effectively train him to do the kind of writing he wishes to do. For Mr. R_____ H_____ is not interested in the variant printings of the letter "P" in successive editions of the *Pickwick Papers*. If he is interested in Dickens at all, it will be because of the felt life in Dickens's novels, the way that Dickens writes about people and their lives, and what this has to show us about being human. Yet very little that he will do in graduate school, so far as I know, will in any way help him to read and identify such things in Dickens with more understanding and insight. For the chances are that he will never once be asked to write a paper "about" such concerns. He will be made to approach the Dickens

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novels in almost every way *except* the one way that he cares about.

And surely the approach dictated to him in graduate school will not help him to understand Dickens better than he now does, in order that he can better teach the Dickens novels to undergraduate students. If he goes into undergraduate teaching, he will have to read Dickens all over again, this time with an eye not to the variant spellings in early editions, but to the larger concerns, the way the novels work as novels. His graduate training, instead of helping him to do this, is far more likely to get in his way, to prevent him from seeing the larger problems, the qualities that have made Dickens into a great novelist instead of a forgotten sentimentalist.

In fact, the chances are that he will do a much better job of teaching the novels of W. M. Thackeray or George Eliot than those of Dickens, because with the first two novelists he will not be burdened down by what will by now be an almost automatic response to unimportant specialized concerns. The best teachers of English that I have known, it seems to me, are by and large those who have liberated themselves from their graduate training. The worst, by the same measure, are those who have not thus liberated themselves, who have attempted to approach the teaching of literature as if it were a form of graduate scholarship.

"Ah, but what of his scholarly career?" someone might ask. What of the books he must write if he is to rise in his profession, and go on to graduate teaching? The question, I submit, is in one sense meaningless, in another sense highly enlightening. In the first place, it implies that the foremost objective of a teaching career is the teaching of graduate courses, and that the way to attain that objective is to produce the kind of scholarship one associates with graduate programs.* Theoretically this is meaningless, because it takes for granted the premise that the goal of graduate education is to produce graduate educators, a debatable proposition at best, and that therefore what *now* passes for graduate education should be the sole criterion for evaluating graduate education! What I am trying to do is to suggest that *the criteria themselves* are wrong.

* This whole attitude is best summed up, I think, in a sentence on a recent fellowship recommendation that I read: "_____ has come to an age where he either has to produce or remain an undergraduate teacher for the rest of his life"!

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Practically the question implies that the great, the most admired works of literary scholarship are those that are the product of a thorough apprenticeship in graduate school education, and that the scholars who have produced those works and thus won for themselves success and reputation are those who have produced according to the tenets of graduate education.

Look at the facts. Who is perhaps the greatest Shakespearean scholar of our century? George Lyman Kittredge, who had no doctoral training and wrote no doctoral dissertation. What work has had the most profound influence on our understanding of Romantic poetry? I believe it is I. A. Richards's *Coleridge on Imagination;* Mr. Richards does not I believe hold the doctorate. What is the single most influential work in American literature? The late F. O. Matthiessen's *American Renaissance*. The author did not do his graduate work in American literature, and his dissertation, a study of Elizabethan translation, was hardly of great value in Matthiessen's life work.

I am not suggesting, of course, that the *majority* of the scholars who have achieved fame and fortune with their writings are not products of the Ph.D. regimen; but I am saying that there is ample evidence available to show that such training is by no means a prerequisite to attainment in scholarship. A significant proportion of the best, the most original, the most influential, the most highly honored literary scholarship of our day is the product of writers who went about their work in their own ways, without prior apprenticeship in graduate study in their fields. And I would further suggest that the chief reason why most of the best scholars hold doctoral degrees in their fields is that, the system being what it was and is, they were automatically drawn into it. In other words, I do not believe that it was the graduate training itself that taught them to be scholars. I think they could have done just as well without the graduate training, *as such training is customarily conducted.*

I emphasize the last phrase, because I am by no means suggesting that graduate training leading up to the Ph.D. degree ought to or could be eliminated. I am in favor of the Ph.D. system. My quarrel is not with the idea of the degree, but with the *kind* of historically oriented training that now constitutes graduate study. I

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believe that it is based on false premises, that it is not designed to produce good writers and teachers, and that it is high time that it be severely reorganized and restructured.

I believe that what now constitutes graduate training should be continued, but only for those scholars who wish to work along those lines. It is designed, I think, for literary historians, for bibliographers, for historians of ideas. It is not designed to train those who would approach literature as individual works of the imagination, as imagic orderings of experience. And since I feel that this approach to literature, and not that of history, bibliography, textual study or philosophy, constitutes by far the most important method of literary study, I feel that graduate study should from the very beginning be designed to train young men and women to understand and appreciate literature in this way.

As it now stands, the graduate training offered in English literature is suitable to no more than a small portion of those who wish such training. For the would-be literary historian, it is admirably conceived. But for the would-be literary critic, it has relatively little to offer. And this despite the fact that the act of criticism is certainly every bit as honorable as the act of writing literary history, every bit as dignified, every bit as relevant and, indeed, one might say, of far more interest to most people. Nor is there any "scholarly" hierarchy involved here, either; I see no reason to grant that literary history, the history of ideas, bibliographical study, is any more "scholarly" than literary criticism and explication. If the word "scholarly" *seems* to connote long columns of footnotes and extensive cross-references to historical data, it is only because our graduate schools have given it this connotation. Cleanth Brooks is just as "scholarly" as John Livingston Lowes; the scholarship of C. M. Bowra is in no way inferior to that of E. K. Chambers. As for myself, I have done enough of both to know that literary criticism is every bit as demanding, every bit as rigorous, every bit as important as historical research, and, from my viewpoint at least, usually a great deal more relevant.

But what does our graduate education curriculum do? It takes the would-be scholar, teaches him to be a historian and to consider critical analysis as an inferior, unscholarly art, and converts

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him into a footnote man. He is told that if he wishes to rise in his profession, if he wishes to become a great "scholar," he must sidestep the act of judgment and embrace the accumulation of peripheral, extraliterary details. Otherwise he is no scholar; he is not "sound," "solid." He goes forth to the academic wars, his once passionate zeal for literature not merely dulled but actively maimed and distorted, prepared to be a pedant.

If, that is, he goes forth at all. And this, it seems to me, is one of the most telling arguments against the Ph.D. system in English literature as presently constituted. In its suppression of all excitement, enjoyment, spontaneity, enthusiasm, it converts the graduate regimen into a psychological ordeal for so many of its participants. Instead of advanced study in literature becoming a fascinating opportunity to explore and learn more about the great treasure trove of the human imagination that is English and American literature, it is made into a monkish process of self-flagellation and psychological debasement, from which its victims emerge permanently crippled. Neurosis, psychosis, self-hatred, these are the concomitants of Life in the Stacks. Purely and simply, graduate study in literature is frequently the cause of great unhappiness, loss of self-respect, misery. And for those who cannot submit themselves to so barbarous a regimen, it means failure, inferiority, frustration. It is no accident, I think, that a disproportionate number of the most original, most independent, most important literary scholars of our time do not possess the Ph.D. degree—Eliot, Pound, Ransom, Brooks, Warren, Empson, Blackmur, Richards, Tate, Burke, Schwartz, Jarrell, Turnell, Wilson, Kazin, Read, Graves, Shapiro, Levin, Campbell, Fergusson. Ah, but it will be objected, most of these men are not only critic-scholars, but poets. Precisely! There was no room for the talents of these men—men for whom the writing of literature is inextricably connected with the reading and study of literature—in the graduate school regimen.

Has this changed in the past quarter-century? Not very much. One has only to examine the titles of Ph.D. dissertations in literature completed during recent years at our major universities to see that the predominant number of thesis topics continue to reflect the academic bias in favor of "solid historical scholarship," "original

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research," tedious, Teutonic source hunting and philological analysis, ponderous philosophical ventures in the history of ideas and so forth. There are exceptions, to be sure; but I insist that they are possible in spite of the system, not because of it, and that they are largely the product of doctoral students fortunate enough to study with those relatively few enlightened scholars who refuse to accept the restrictive limitations imposed by the system.

If ever the literature Ph.D. is to serve the function for which it is ostensibly designed, that of enhancing and intensifying the quality of literary study and training, I think it will have to be severely revamped. It will have to discard many of its present procedures and assumptions, and take on others.

What the study of English literature needs, I think, is a few scholars, dissatisfied with present standards of graduate study and anxious to improve it, who possess both the willingness to look objectively at certain premises that hitherto have been automatically accepted, and the courage to act on their findings. They have got to ask themselves exactly what it is that they are trying to do in offering graduate study, and whether there may not be better ways to go about doing it than those now being used. They have got to set bravely out along new paths, and learn as they go.

It is not easy to fly in the face of convention, to suggest drastic changes in what has been standard procedure for decades. But I think that the need to do so is so great that an intelligent, imaginative effort to do something about the problem would find immediate and sympathetic response everywhere. Indeed, if but *one major graduate school,* led by a few scholars of unquestioned stature, were to move out in a new direction, the effect would soon be to liberate the entire profession. The outmoded, unimaginative, tedious structure of graduate literary study as it presently exists would come tumbling down, and in its place there would emerge a method of scholarly training that would restore to the profession of literary scholarship the excitement, the interest, the meaningfulness that any academic discipline must have if it is to survive and flourish. At last we might have a system of study more nearly worthy of those great works of the human imagination, the understanding of which constitutes after all the only real purpose of literary scholarship.

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MUTANTS

Hate is
an oblong cave
dark, dank-glistening hot
sweating walls wadded with fur-like
faintly abrasive stuff. Itchy. Sick-saccharine
smell of cheap perfume on semi-soiled damp coats. Of
elderly women who rarely bathe, use talcum freely. Room for
one. Cramped. No stretching. Position changed with difficulty.
Motionless attention to ceaseless scroll of one's hurts. Wan sourceless
light. Temperature 83°. Cold draughts come and cease and come.
Steady drip alternating unaccountable rhythm. Faster, slow,
slower. Fast. Otherwise soundless. No distractions.
None. Oneself. Miles from all and everyone.
Never to be found in merciless privacy.
Never die or live.
Hate.

Freedom is
out of Hate-cave
safe from Love.

Limitless beach
under infinite sky
ocean unmeasurable.

Knowledgeless
unresponsibility for
people, places, things.

Demandless
decisionless time
Stretching forever.

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Purgatory is
Curettage of the emotions
Scrape, scrape
I cannot bear it
Afraid. Fear being barren.

Large events
live themselves through us
Pains, joys
deaths, births.

In time's smaller moments
(when we must
move ourselves)
We know ourselves.

Problem; to open
or close the frightened gate?
Love is finally possible
having hosted hate.

Love is
free to go
prefers to stay
Wide as sky
on a summer day
Love feeds itself
replenishes
while spending self
Learning by living
Growing with giving
moving in permanence
Spread-flying
staying
Love

Mary Swayne

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The Way It Is

WALTER TELLER

IN A WORLD WHERE MOST THINGS ARE GETTING BIGGER, more organized, more homogenized, small things tend to get lost—small things such as individuals, and separate personal lives. You may say the personal life ought simply to happen. Maybe in certain places and ages it did. Times being the way they are, however, a man can hardly count on it.

How few of life's days and hours get noticed, and then are they noted by worth or by chance? A nonweekend day, a nonrush-hour hour. It's the time of year when you find an acorn and then look around for the cup to invest it in. In Bucks County, north of New Hope, I am walking beside the Delaware Division of the Pennsylvania Canal, along the towpath between the canal and the river. This towpath could easily be one of the finest walking ways in the world. It passes through sixty miles of valley favorable to canal constructors and by the same token favoring walkers. Thirty years have passed since the last barge was wafted by and the defunct canal handed back to the state. In 1940, the commonwealth declared the canal-way a park. Officials named it Theodore Roosevelt State Park. Nobody hereabouts, however, refers to it in those terms for the name isn't right. There just is no inner necessity to a name like Theodore Roosevelt State Park, no real knowing of the core thing to be named, and therefore no beautiful naming. Indians managed these matters better. Sensing the spirit of a place, they knew how to designate it, could dignify the spot where water was found, or deify it if they were really thirsty.

So why not a name strung with wampum words in praise of the green-grassy towpath, the berm and canal; the twenty-three locks from Bristol to Easton, and the long, level reaches between? Words of praise for boatmen approaching the locks, sounding their horns at the keepers, cussing the mules as the boats were locked; praise

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for the known engineers who laid out the line and the unknowns who labored, doing the earthwork; for Theodore Roosevelt if you like, and day-to-day citizen-conservers.

In the Traces. Northward I walked on the narrow brown band of bare earth that threads the otherwise grassy towpath, now sunshine-dappled and spangled with yellowing leaves where often, they say, mules were driven in tandem, the lead mule wearing a bell round its neck, on its head a straw hat with its ears sticking through. "And the islands laugh exultant. . . ," I sang as I walked. Next thing I knew, free association cast me—mentally—onto Bulls Island. The day being cloudlessly fair and my afternoon unobstructed, I should take time to go there in fact.

Easy in the traces, so to speak, I kept to the towpath path on which, in more recent times, only occasional human feet have been clopping. As I rounded a wide-sweeping bend in the river, the lower end of Bulls Island hove into view. An inland island, lying between Raven Rock on the Jersey shore and Lumberville in Bucks County, it is well secured; on its eastern side by a short, undistinguished vehicular bridge, and on the western by a suspension footbridge, a touch of San Luis Rey about it, and also of John A. Roebling.

I kept on and presently saw the bridge right ahead, its cables looping from lofty steel piers. Although the superstructure is fashioned of steel, the older, substructural part is stone. The masonry, until twenty or so years ago, shouldered a covered bridge. Where the old bridge crouched low as though feeling its own dead load, the new one stands tall and athletic.

I love the stuff the bridge-builders make, most of all their suspension bridges. A suspension bridge is not a stiff bridge yet it lives under daily tension. This one stepped lightly from pier to pier. Quickening my pace, I hauled through the village of Lumberville, then started across to Bulls Island. Halfway over, however, I stopped; on a bridge there is so much to see. I looked at the hard-drawn wires, linkage and clamps, and examined the reinforcing laid in by eight-legged spiders. Their ingenious filigree fluttered in every angle, and of course all the while the river kept moving below.

There is something abstract in a river, I thought. From a bridge

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looking down, you get the message. The water is constantly flowing under, always passing, yet the river is always there. How many times have I stood on bridges at Washington Crossing, New Hope or Stockton and watched the water, yet missed what the river was up to; making the abstract palpable—in this case, the abstraction of flow?

In the Time Flow. Always the present is flowing off the moving belt of the past. On Bulls Island now, did I not walk where Canvass White and his youthful assistant, Ashbel Welsh, had trod? Born in Oneida County, New York, Canvass White was one of the great engineers. Although slight of build and always frail, he fought in the War of 1812. Later, traveling in Britain, he studied British canals. It was on the first big American canal, the Erie, however, that he really learned his profession. In 1830, he received a call from New Jersey. Entrepreneurs in that state proposed to connect the Delaware and Raritan Rivers. Such a link would enable a barge loaded with coal, say at Easton, to slide down the Pennsylvania Canal, cross over the Delaware River at New Hope; at Lambertville opposite, pick up the projected Delaware and Raritan and thus, via Trenton and New Brunswick, make its way to New York. Canvass White, summoned, came. He brought his man, Ashbel Welsh, with him.

Without a supply of water sufficient to last through the driest times of the year, a canal cannot do its work. To obtain the water for the Delaware and Raritan, it was decided to build a feeder, twenty-two and a half miles long, from a point above Bulls Island to the Trenton terminus of the main waterway. While Canvass White, forty years old at the time, engineered the main stem, namely the canal from Trenton to New Brunswick, he turned over the job of building the feeder to Ashbel Welsh, then twenty-one.

Young though he was, Ashbel Welsh was a veteran, he too having learned on the Erie. Faced with the new assignment, he called for help. Four thousand men from County Cork answered. The immigrants, ferried over the ocean in boatloads, came with only the clothes on their backs. Ashbel Welsh equipped them with shovels and picks, paid them the going rate, seventy-five cents a day, that is, from sunup to sundown.

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In Lambertville, five miles below Bulls Island, segregated in the south end of town, the newcomers pitched their shanties. Cholera broke out among them, living as they did. No board of health existed nor was there a hospital. If the men were in peril, so was the canal. Working now to save all, Ashbel Welsh inaugurated a board of health. In a half-finished house, he set up a hospital. He also directed the burying of the dead, more or less where they fell, on Bulls Island, at Washington Crossing and all down the line.

Constructing canals, excavation, embankment and masonry, was hard, monotonous work whether in Assyria or in New Jersey; and it never paid well. If the prevailing New Jersey wage was low, so was the price of whiskey—twelve or thirteen cents a pint. Fighting on the job was common, free-for-alls almost routine. On one occasion, however, Ashbel Welsh had to call out the Lambertville Military Company. A contemporary reporter, describing that swinging Irish fracas, summed it up in two words. He called it a shovel riot. Jasus! Jasus-Joseph-and-Mary.

Came 25 June 1834. The canal opened for business. The first barge carried Ashbel Welsh along with canal company directors, principal stockholders, the Governor of New Jersey and various officials from Trenton, up the feeder to Lambertville. There, very fittingly, all sat down to a banquet at company expense. Dinner over, the party returned by barge to Trenton. Next day the celebration continued, through the main canal and all the way to New Brunswick. Not on board was Canvass White. As the canal neared completion his health, never strong, gave way. He went south, as advised, and so missed the maiden voyage. In fact, he never saw the finished canal but died south later that year, age forty-four.

Directors departed, Canvass White dead, Ashbel Welsh alone was left with the untried, now peaceful and very inviting canal. No man knew better than he what the cost had been in broken backs, heads and hearts. Not many are called to construct a canal. Now it was done, how did he feel about it? What did he say? Searching old records, one finds no word, and yet Ashbel Welsh communicated his feelings. From the June day in 1834 when first he entered the canal, traveled the distance, to and fro, he apparently never could break away but was ever after bound to it. He did not return to the place he had come from but instead settled in Lambertville,

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not far from where his pick and shovel men bled. Throughout the rest of a long and productive life—he had almost fifty years still to go—his beat, his love and his admiration were up and down the canal.

People are long on courage, certainly most people are. It is usually something else that is lacking: knowledge, wisdom, imagination, a vocabulary or money. Most frequently it is style, style in the sense of a characteristic mode that reveals a man's independence. Sometimes a man becomes rich enough to achieve it. Sometimes he stays poor enough.

Winey Afternoon. Driving north from the home space, Lahaska, I steered along the Carversville Road, through Buckingham Township and into Plumstead until I came to Hickory Run. By the road and the run, the latter a puny stream which after flowing northeast a couple of miles contributes its mite to the Delaware Canal, Herbert Goff makes his home. His place is not hard to recognize: a sign that tells the world, Honey for Sale, a low pile of chestnut coal lying exposed in the dooryard, the unmistakable stance of his house. This diminutive, concrete-block job has a did-it-myself look about it; also a promise in its random expression to remain forever unplastered. Behind the house, in easy array, stand a number of foursquare, brightly embellished constructions, gravestone high. What are they? Totems? Or hives?

The latter, to be sure, only where would one find their aesthetic equal? Does everyone know that the old-fashioned dome-shaped hive, the skep made of twisted straw, has been gone (except as a trade mark) these past hundred years? The modern, or Langstroth hive, which Herbert Goff's are, consists of two or more rectangular boxes set on a low stand and topped by a metal cover. Factory fabricated, Langstroth hives are finished in institutional gray. This color is standard. Herbert Goff's hives, however—he maintains nine—are bedecked in all the shades of enamel one sees on home-painted jalopies, color and gloss so bad that those who set store by ugly beauty might say his hives are so far-out ugly that they are beautiful but I would still say they are ugly. "Why did you do it?" I asked Herbert Goff. He answered, "So that passers-by wouldn't think this

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is a cemetery." An old man's problem, I thought. A man can appear, like Herbert Goff, to be happily growing older, but the trouble with happily growing older is that it shortens your life.

A pink-tipped, fine-boned little man, built like a chicken—a wrinkled broiler, old but still jaunty, Herbert Goff lives alone. He makes brooms, canes chairs, keeps bees—and on the *qui vive*. Certainly he was on the alert when I drove into his dooryard. "Look at this now," he said, as, with both hands rummaging among the weeds, he pointed to some of the last of his honey-producing blossoms, a few scattered blooms of Polish and Argentine rape. "Bees don't go to a blossom until it's just right," he said, "then they go crazy over it." So far as I could tell, however, no bee that afternoon was losing its mind. Moving in and out of their homes, they were quietly going about their work. The blossoms, apparently, were not that right nor the hives, in their awful colors, that wrong. Herbert Goff said science teachers sometimes brought him their classes. "It's always the dumb kids get stung," he said, at the same time watching closely to see how I hit it off with the bees.

Honeybees were not the only ones in his bonnet. "No word yet from Heaven or Hell," he announced abruptly. "The ministers talk about it but if they could prove what they talk about, the churches would soon be full. Look at this now!" Chicken-like, he darted off, sprinting toward the stream where a rosebush stood, and on it a single pink rose. He gathered and held it tenderly. "I'd like to see her with this in her hair," he said.

I wondered who the lady might be. "Waiting for her to come down the pike? Who is she?" I asked.

"A rich and beautiful woman," he said, "in a big white car. Last time, she bought a broom and two jars of honey. Called me lover boy. I said to her, 'I think I'm about right for you.' 'Lover boy,' she said, 'you've got me frustrated!' "

"A regular queen bee," I said. "What are you going to do with her?"

Herbert Goff grew thoughtful. "Look at that third hive now, the orange and green," he answered. "This morning I noticed them clustering around the entrance. Swarm fever. Quick as I could, I opened the hive, found the queen and clipped her wings with a manicure scissors. If they swarm now, they won't go far. Take good

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care of a queen bee, I say. Hold onto a rich and beautiful woman. Never let her go."

Noblest apiarian of all, and pioneer explorer of a certain portion of space, Lorenzo Lorraine Langstroth was born Christmas Day 1810 in Philadelphia. Forty years earlier, his paternal grandfather, Thomas Langstroth, a Yorkshireman, had come to the city, prospered as a paper manufacturer, married and raised a large family. Langstroth's maternal grandmother, Elizabeth Lorraine, descendant of a French count, came to Maryland at the time of the Huguenot emigration. She inherited a plantation when her husband died. Believing, however, that slavery was wrong, she freed her plantation hands, then moved north.

Lorenzo Lorraine was the second child and eldest son of John and Rebecca Langstroth. In the classic manner of men of genius, he was drawn to his life-work early. "Although my parents were persons of good intelligence, and in comfortable circumstances," he wrote in his *Reminiscences* many years later, "they were not at all pleased to see me spend so much time in digging holes in the gravel walk and filling them with crumbs of bread, pieces of meat, and dead flies, to attract the roving ants, so that I might better watch their curious habits. . . . I was once whipped because I had worn holes in my pants by too much kneeling on the gravel walks. . . . But nothing that could be said or done prevented me from giving to my favorite pursuits much of the time which my school companions spent in play."

This unusual play did not interfere with homework, however. Lorenzo did well in school, excelled in Latin, memorized hundreds of lines of Vergil, and at seventeen was ready for Yale. In New Haven, except for what he called "a few trifling observations upon the habits of glowworms," he did not follow the early favorite pursuits. Instead, he studied mathematics and various scientific subjects with his college guardian, Professor Denison Olmsted. Olmsted, a mathematician, a practical inventor as well as natural philosopher, was an innovator of laboratory work for students. Langstroth also studied literature, composition and religion. When he graduated Phi Beta Kappa in 1831 and entered the university divinity school, he seemed to be changing direction.

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Beginning in his early twenties, Langstroth suffered attacks of "head trouble," as he called it. In 1834, he returned to Yale as a tutor in mathematics. A couple of years later, while teaching at a girls' school in New Haven, he married Anne Tucker, one of his students. These teaching posts were but two of many he won, then had to relinquish, always for reasons of health.

In 1838, while serving as minister of the South Church, Andover, Massachusetts—Langstroth was both cleric and teacher—he chanced to see a tumbler of honey on a friend's parlor table. In those days extracted honey was all but unknown. Buyers wanted it in the comb. About the only method as yet devised for obtaining a perfect comb rather than a dripping mass cut from a hive, was to place a glass tumbler in the hive in such manner that bees with surplus honey would fill it. At sight of the glass, "filled with beautiful honey in the comb," Langstroth wrote long after, ". . . the enthusiasm of my boyish days seemed, like a pent-up fire, to burst out into full flame. . . . I bought two stocks of bees in common box hives, and thus my apiarian career began."

Years passed. Langstroth continued to work in school or pulpit, supporting a growing family, coping with recurring head trouble, and also keeping and observing bees. A scholar, he read all the books on the subject. Beekeeping methods, he saw, had changed little since ancient times.

In 1848, Langstroth, now minister of the Second Congregational Church of Greenfield, Massachusetts, resigned; again on account of ill health. He returned to his native city. In Philadelphia, the same year, he opened a school for young women, and, on a second floor porch of his house, set up an apiary. The following year he moved the bees to the country, that is, to West Philadelphia. They did better there, produced more honey, and even brought Langstroth some income.

For ten years Langstroth had studied bees. He said he was slow to learn. But how slow was he in the light of beekeeping millenia? He knew he had gone as far as he could with the kinds of hives available. He understood that the key to further observation lay in a hive cover that could be opened freely, the key not only to study, but also to economically practical beekeeping.

The reason covers could not be lifted from hives then in use

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was because the bees glued them fast with propolis, or bee glue. Propolis is a reddish, resinous cement collected from tree buds. Bees use it to strengthen cells and also to stop every crevice and crack in the hive. Propolis is strong. Covers sealed with it have to be jimmied. When replaced, such covers become sealed again.

Hive covers served to protect the comb bars, wood bars set into notches and on which the bees hung the comb. Sometime in 1851, Langstroth patiently seeking the clue to a movable cover, lowered the ends of the comb bars a little, thereby leaving a shallow space between them and the cover. To his surprise, the bees respected it, that is, they left it open. Very surprising because bees seal narrow spaces. In larger ones they build comb. Langstroth had not read or heard of such an occurrence. He had discovered the bee space, a space bees would neither close with propolis nor fill with comb. Further work enabled the former mathematics teacher to determine exact dimensions: five-sixteenths of an inch. The cover at last was movable even though bars, with their comb, remained fast.

Comb bars were fast inasmuch as the sides of the comb were attached to the sides of the hive. 30 October 1851. "Returning late in the afternoon from the apiary," Langstroth wrote in his diary, ". . . and pondering, as I had so often done before, how I could get rid of the disagreeable necessity of cutting the attachments of the combs from the walls of the hives . . . the almost self-evident idea of using the same bee space . . . came into my mind, and in a moment the suspended movable frames, kept at suitable distances from each other and the case containing them, came into being. Seeing by intuition, as it were, the end from the beginning, I could scarcely refrain from shouting out my 'Eureka!' in the open streets."

In that moment of revelation, the bee space advanced in Langstroth's mind to become the structural principle later known as the hive corridor. Instead of a comb bar, there would now be a comb frame; in other words a hive in which the parts would be spaced, that is, isolated from one another by the bee space. Langstroth gave up teaching, in fact sold the school, in order to give all he had to perfecting the movable frame hive. Late in 1852 he obtained a patent, but then the old malady, trouble with his head, returned. This time he sank so low he could not manage the apiary but had to sell it too. Toward the end of the year, seeking a change, he went

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back to Greenfield to live with a married sister. His wife, with their three children, stayed behind and took a job teaching.

At his sister's home, Langstroth decided to write an account of all he had learned about bees. He sent the manuscript, a few pages at a time, to his wife who made a fair copy for the printer. Written in a single winter, subsidized by his sister's husband, *Langstroth on the Hive and the Honey-Bee* by Lorenzo Lorraine Langstroth was published in Northampton in May 1853. In later years Langstroth revised it three times. Still later, other hands added to it. This masterwork of nearly four hundred pages, which has since appeared in five European languages, remains as keen-edged and useful as when it was written.

Langstroth's great work was done by the time he was forty-three. Periods of breakdown followed, sometimes lasting for months. His illness never was diagnosed. Perhaps it was aggravated by patent infringements and lawsuits. Lack of capital and business judgment were long-continuing problems. After 1858, reunited with his family, Langstroth lived in Oxford, Ohio, where he established an apiary and continued his researches. Despite a streetcar accident, a stroke, the death of his only son when he, Langstroth, was sixty, and the loss of his wife—a valiant woman—a couple of years later, he lived to age eighty-four. He died peacefully at the home of a daughter in Dayton, Ohio, 6 October 1895, poor but honored. Disciplined in religion and science, a keeper of flocks as well as of bees, teacher and writer, classicist and inventor, Lorenzo Lorraine Langstroth, American, gave the world a design that in its spatial relationships cannot be improved on.

Vintage Afternoon. Windy and clearing. Walking out Honey Hollow Road, on the edge of the home space, against the traffic—and there is more of it; the fog of traffic increases. Overnight, that is in the past few months, a whole shopping center of gift and resort shops springs up in Lahaska. Who goes to gift and gift-wrapping shops? Lobstermen, clam diggers, poets, painters, rocking-chair makers, philosophers, dart throwers, foresters, peace corpsmen, keepers of bees? Amid the prevailing tendencies, and feeling them too, a man either stems the tide a little, lives against the traffic or, in a world getting larger, becomes a part of the flow.

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The Promise of Underwater Archaeology

GEORGE F. BASS

THE GREAT HISTORICAL WEALTH lying on the bottom of the Mediterranean has been known to archaeologists only since the turn of the century. At that time a group of Greek sponge-divers stumbled onto a wreck at Antikythera that yielded quantities of marble and bronze statues, pottery, glass and a remarkable astronomical computer that has greatly increased our respect for Greek technology. After the addition of the magnificent "Antikythera Youth" to the Athens Museum, sculptures continued to come from the sea: the Marathon Boy, the marbles from the Piraeus harbor, the jockey and horse from Artemision and above all the Artemision Zeus.

These were chance finds and, while important in themselves, their excavation can hardly be called scientific. Only with the invention of the aqualung by Cousteau and Gagnan in 1943 did divers gain the mobility necessary for the delicate work demanded by systematic archaeology. Soon after, notably along the French and Italian coasts, expeditions were able to concern themselves with hull construction, methods of lading and even the daily life on ancient ships. These excavations used the technique of sketching underwater on frosted plastic, and established the air-lift, a type of suction hose, as the primary excavating tool of the marine archaeologist. Unfortunately, however, the supervision usually came from nondiving archaeologists who could follow the

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The drawings in this article are by ERIC J. RYAN.

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work only through sketches, photographs and, occasionally, underwater television.

The primary duty of the field archaeologist is to record and present the smallest details of his excavation so that the proof of his interpretation is readily available to other scholars. At least one ancient wreck has puzzled some experts on ancient pottery who claim that various pieces of the cargo are divided by two centuries. Their thesis, that two wrecks were involved, may be denied by the excavators of the wreck, but the proof of the denial is not to be found in the excavation report since it contains not a plan or section of the material as it lay on the seabed. That two ships could fall in the same spot is not at all improbable. On the treacherous reef at Yassi Island, near ancient Halicarnassus in western Turkey, wreck is piled upon wreck, and, nearby, two marvelously preserved wrecks lie within seventy-five feet of each other. Methods of making accurate plans and sections underwater became the pressing need.

With the development of various sounding devices, metal detectors and small, inexpensive submarines, there can be no doubt that wrecks of all periods of antiquity will be discovered and excavated in the Mediterranean. Neolithic and Early Bronze Age ships may settle forever the question of early migration routes. If Middle Bronze Age peoples came to Greece by sea, we should find ships carrying the typical grey "Minyan" pottery so closely associated with them. One or two Iron Age ships may solve the problem of the ivory trade of that period, or answer the puzzle of whence came the bronze griffin heads found from Turkey to the Etruscan tombs of Italy. And, if precise methods of excavation are followed, we will learn exactly how triremes were rowed.

The University Museum of the University of Pennsylvania in 1960 undertook a program to develop the means of recording and preserving the data from such wrecks. The first step in the program was to staff the Museum's marine expeditions with the proper personnel; it was realized at once that weekend skin divers and helmeted sponge divers, who had done so much of the previous work, had no more place in such operations than they would have

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on land digs. The present staff consists of archaeologists and archaeology students, draftsmen, photographers, an architect, a marine biologist and a medical doctor, all of whom dive and most of whom learned to dive specifically for underwater archaeology. Rounding out the staff are a number of carefully selected experienced divers and mechanics. Such a staff must of necessity be larger than most found on land for its members do the actual digging and cleaning. On land one archaeologist may direct a vast crew of skilled and unskilled laborers. Underwater, however, each worker must be able to supervise himself and make sudden decisions that may radically affect the interpretation of the finds.

The areas chosen for study, along the coasts of Lycia and Caria in southwest Turkey, were charted by Peter Throckmorton. Gathering his leads while working and diving with Turkish sponge divers, Mr. Throckmorton was able to locate about thirty wrecks covering a span of over two millennia. The first of these wrecks to be excavated was dated to the Late Bronze Age by a study of the finds raised upon its discovery. It lay in ninety feet of water just off Cape Gelidonya.

A preliminary survey revealed that the wreck rested on a rocky bottom with almost no covering of sand to preserve wood and other organic material. The metal cargo was still *in situ,* but it was covered with a lime sea deposit up to eight inches thick, and hard as concrete. The concretion presented a double problem: how to make an accurate plan of the objects imbedded in it, and how to remove and preserve fragile artifacts such as bronze knife blades and spearpoints without breaking them.

On land such problems could have been easily overcome, but on land there is not the all-important time limitation. Underwater, a diver must breathe air at the same pressure as the pressure of the water surrounding him. The deeper he goes and the longer he remains at any depth, the more pressurized nitrogen will be absorbed by his body. If the diver ascends too rapidly, the nitrogen will come out of solution with much the same effect as bubbles appearing in a bottle of champagne when it is uncorked. Such bubbles in the body may block the bloodstream in various areas, causing the

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crippling and often fatal divers' disease known as the bends. The only precaution is strict adherence to diving tables giving the rate of ascent following dives of various depths and duration. At Gelidonya the practical limit was only one hour and eight minutes for each diver to work each day.

In order to save these precious minutes on the bottom, it was decided to cut loose lumps of concreted cargo, weighing up to three hundred pounds a piece, and to raise these intact. Before being cut free with hammer and chisel, each lump was marked in several spots. These spots were triangulated with horizontal meter-tapes running from fixed reference points driven into the rock around the site. The triangulated points were put onto a plan and the lumps were raised to the surface with a winch and cable. In one instance wood was seen protruding from beneath a heap of concreted cargo. Winching from a small boat in a rough sea presented the real danger that this fragile evidence might be crushed. The mass of concretion was, therefore, attached to a large plastic balloon with a lifting force of four hundred pounds; the balloon was inflated on the bottom from a diver's mouthpiece and carried the cargo gently to the surface.

The lumps of concretion were carried to the expedition camp and reassembled exactly as they had appeared on the seabed. Then they were cleaned with chisels so that the cargo finally lay free and could be drawn and photographed in detail. Using the points triangulated on the bottom, the architect was able to add the details to his overall plan which now showed the position of each object as it had rested in the ancient ship. A record of the work in progress was also kept in a number of "aerial surveys." These were made by a photographer, with plumb line and level attached to his camera, swimming at a fixed distance above the wreck. The resultant series of photographs were enlarged to a set scale and glued together to form montages showing the entire site.

Such work was exceedingly slow. The jumble of wood that had been crushed beneath the cargo was the only well-preserved portion of the ship's hull. Although this covered an area of little more than a square meter, it took the entire team of divers three

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weeks to cut behind the solid rock on which it rested so that the wood fragments could be raised together and studied on land.

These fragments matched the elements used by Odysseus in making a small boat (not, it would seem, a raft) with the aid of Calypso (*Odyssey* 5.233-261). There were planks with bored holes and dowels, and at least two of the planks were joined together at their ends. On board, perhaps only as part of the cargo, were the main tools used by Odysseus: axes and adzes. Homer also tells how Odysseus made a wattle fence around his ship to keep out the waves, and then "spread out a great deal of brushwood." Because this last phrase has made little sense to classical scholars, it has been variously translated and interpreted as a brushwood bed, as part of the wattle fence or a backing for it, and even as ballast. It would now seem that a literal translation of the passage is all that is needed. Over the planks of the Gelidonya wreck was spread a layer of brushwood, with the bark still well-preserved, which served as a cushion between the heavy metal cargo and the thin hull planks.

Not enough wood was preserved to give an accurate idea of the size of the ship, but the distribution of the cargo suggests a length of not much more than eight or nine meters. This would easily have handled the cargo and ballast stones that were collected from the site. The cargo was almost completely of metal. More than a ton of copper and bronze objects was preserved, making this by far the largest hoard of such implements yet found by pre-classical archaeologists.

Forty ingots of almost pure copper, in the so-called "oxhide" shape and averaging forty-five pounds apiece in weight, were found piled neatly on the site. Traces of matting indicate that these may have been wrapped together in small stacks. Over ninety of these ingots had been known previously from the Late Bronze Age, appearing in Cyprus, Crete, Greece and Sardinia, and many numismatists considered them a premonetary form of currency. Their superficial resemblance to dried oxhides had even led to the conclusion that one ingot was worth one ox. Careful study of the Gelidonya group, however, has revealed that the ingots were merely convenient forms for transporting raw copper. They have

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no standard weight (variations in weight among those from different sites had been attributed by some archaeologists to local standards in use), and their resemblance to dried skins has been shown to be completely fortuitous. Their "legs," previously known as rather late developments in the evolution of the ingot shape, were merely handles for ease of porterage; the faces, one rough and "hairy," and the other with a rolled rim seemingly representing the curling of a dried skin, are simply the result of the method of casting and the type of mold used. Dozens of ingot fragments, in small groups on the wreck, have proved by weight not to be fractional parts of whole ingots, as might be expected if the ingots were truly currency.

The use of these ingots is seen in a wall painting in the Tomb of Rekh-mi-rē' at Thebes. Egyptian smiths are shown melting down "oxhide" ingots to be cast with square white ingots. The obvious conclusion from this scene, that copper and tin were being mixed to form bronze, has been contested by some authorities who have thought that the white ingots must be lead. This is not as arbitrary as it might seem, for only two or three items of pure tin have been found from this early date. The Gelidonya wreck, however, yielded a number of piles of white powdery material that, after being carefully collected in plastic bags and analyzed, proved to be pure tin oxide. This proves that the previous lack of evidence of industrial tin had been due only to the fortunes of excavation. Not only may we now feel sure that the white ingots of the Egyptian tomb paintings are tin, but this discovery also adds an argument for the identification of *anāku* in the old Assyrian documents from Cappadocia as tin rather than lead.

Most of the ingots are stamped with Cypro-Minoan signs. The meaning of these letters might add greatly to our understanding of this still-undeciphered script. Only after careful analysis of each ingot will it be possible to say if the marks refer to different mines, foundries, destinations or metal quality. Careful excavation again plays an important role. Stratigraphy, so essential for chronological conclusions in the excavation of land sites, might seem to be of little value in the study of an ancient wreck; most of the objects on

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a ship are contemporary. Even here, however, the general rule that "higher means later" has validity. If all of the ingots (or, in the case of other ships, wine jars or tiles) were not put on board at the same place, those lowest in the hold would have come from the earliest ports of call. Thus, if we find by analysis that the lower ingots from the Bronze Age ship seem to come from different mines than those above, it may some day be possible to trace the route of the vessel. This information, together with a study of ancient place-names, might offer still another clue to the meaning of the ingot signs.

With the ingot fragments, often packed together in the same baskets, were hundreds of bronze tools, weapons and household utensils. These included picks, hoes, axes, adzes, mirrors, bowls, chisels, knives, a hammer, a spade and a spit. Some were complete and may have been used by the crew of the ship, but the vast majority were broken before being stored on board. One perfectly preserved wicker basket bottom was found still holding tightly packed scraps of metal. Similar founder's hoards have been found on land and it was known from these that old utensils were commonly melted and recast in Mycenaean times. A swage block and a possible stone anvil make it almost certain that a smith traveled on board the ship. Numerous whetstones, found in the "cabin" area, would have been used to sharpen newly made tools.

From the area assumed to be the cabin of the ship came such personal possessions as scarabs, weights, pottery, stone mace-heads, pieces of crystal, a cylinder seal, an oil lamp and even traces of a meal: olive pits and fish bones were found imbedded in concretion. An astragal was probably only for playing the popular ancient game of knucklebones. The only nonmetallic objects certainly not from the cabin area were two stone mortars and a jar of glass beads.

A study of the ship and its cargo allows us to reconstruct something of its history. The bits of broken pottery give a date of around 1200 B.C., when the entire eastern Mediterranean was in a state of upheaval. The main part of the cargo was certainly from Cyprus, known as the copper center of the late Bronze Age; not only the ingots, but two hundred and thirty-two of three hundred and two bronze objects found on board find their closest parallels on Cyprus.

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Although the ship loaded its cargo in Cyprus, there is no reason to assume that it was Cypriot. Egyptian tomb paintings show both Cretan Minoans and Syrians bringing copper "oxhide" ingots to the pharaoh as tribute. The pottery seems to have a mixed background, but the lamp—the most likely of the terra-cotta objects to have been a permanent item in the ship—is Syrian. Some of the weights are of a type and standard used in Egypt, Syria and Cyprus, and tell us little. The scarabs and cylinder seal, while possibly trinkets picked up en route, seem also to be Syrian. There is also a possibility that the tin originated in Syria. Such evidence, although not conclusive, led the author to believe that we were dealing with a Syrian merchantman that had picked up its cargo in Cyprus. Since that time an analysis of the wood has shown that the hull was probably made with Syrian wood, while the brushwood, surely picked up with the metal cargo, seems to be Cypriot.

With the lessons learned at Gelidonya it was possible to devise more efficient methods of working underwater for the next project. This was a Byzantine wreck lying on a slope in one hundred to one hundred and thirty feet of water just off Yassi Island near Bodrum. The greater depth limited daily diving times to the extent that mechanical aids, offering both speed and accuracy, became essential to the architect. Three new devices were tried (FIGURE 1). The first was a pair of plane tables set on opposite sides of the wreck. Two divers, sighting through simple alidades, could record vectors and elevations on a surveying pole held by a third diver. This proved successful for overall measurements, but demanded great clarity of the water and the use of three divers. A five-meter square mapping frame was then placed over part of the wreck; this was leveled on its telescopic legs and positioned by the plane tables. A horizontal beam rode across the top of the frame, using two sides of the frame as tracks. Yoked to this beam was a vertical pole that could be moved back and forth on the beam as well as up and down. The sides of the frame, the horizontal beam and the vertical pole were all calibrated in centimeters. By placing the bottom of the pole on an object, therefore, it was possible to read both coordinates and an elevation for its position. Again, too

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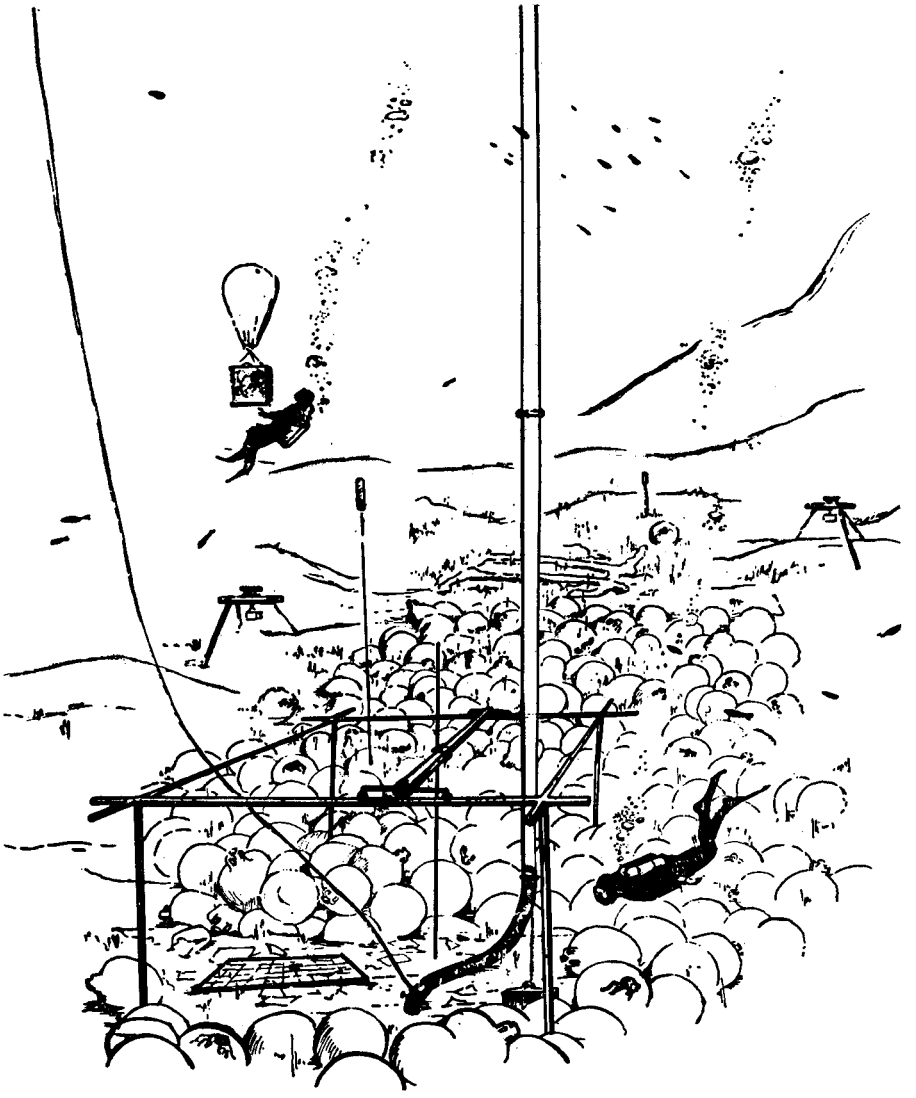

FIGURE 1.

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much time was taken in recording each point, so a movable, two-meter square grid was placed on the wreck. Detailed drawings, photographs and elevations could be made through the wires of the grid, making it necessary to record only the four corners of the grid with the mapping frame.

These aids were excellent for a beginning, but all needed refinement before being used on a detailed plan of the wooden hull that came to light under the cargo. In the second season on the Byzantine wreck a variation of the mapping frame was used (FIGURES 2 and 3). This is essentially a combination of nine frames, each two meters by six meters, assembled like steps over the entire length of the wreck. Each step is horizontal and may be moved down independently of the others on its legs as the excavation goes deeper into the sand; this insures that the frames are always level and are always near the objects to be plotted beneath. A number of two-meter square grids ride over the frames, each having three positions on each step. Thus the wreck is broken into twenty-seven squares that can be independently excavated, drawn and photographed. Photographic towers of light metal are bolted to the grids to insure perfect grid pictures of each area. Objects are identified in the photographs by numbered plastic tags attached to the objects on the wreck as they appear in the course of excavation. Distortion caused by the slope of the ground, which puts some objects at an appreciably lower level than the grid, must be corrected by the architect before he can use these grid photographs in making his plans and sections; lens distortion has not been significant when using the proper cameras.

Improvements in the air lift were also made. The air lift is no more than a large, vertical pipe with a flexible lower end. Air is sent to the lower end of the pipe through a hose. This air rises through the pipe, pulling water, sand and mud with it. The air lift should be used only for removing loose sand and not, as is common, for actual excavating. Wood can be easily broken by it, and the original location of small objects sucked up by it is never known. Tiny pieces from time to time do enter the pipe, so at Yassi Island a wire basket was bolted to the top of the pipe. The mesh of the wire

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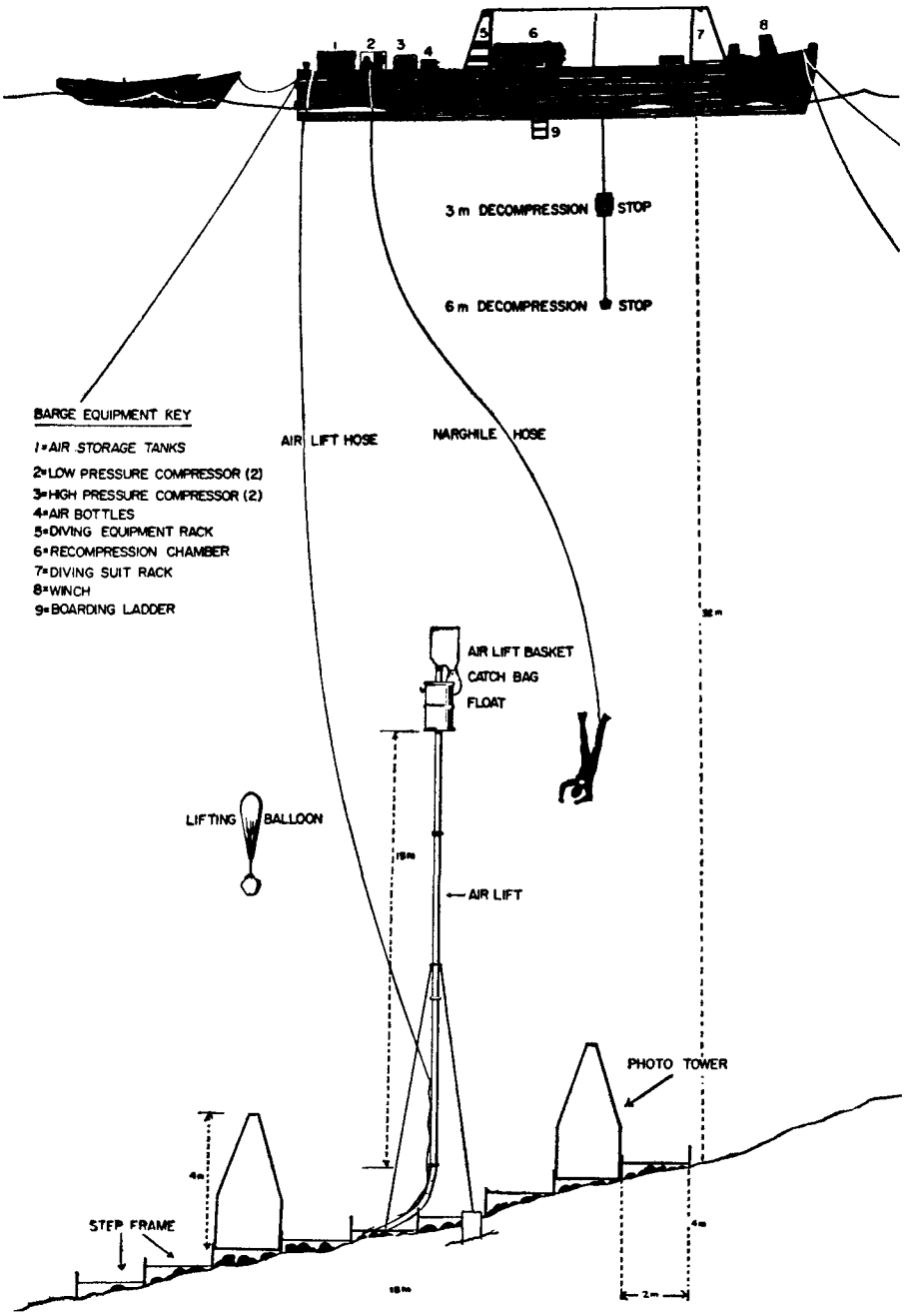

FIGURE 2.

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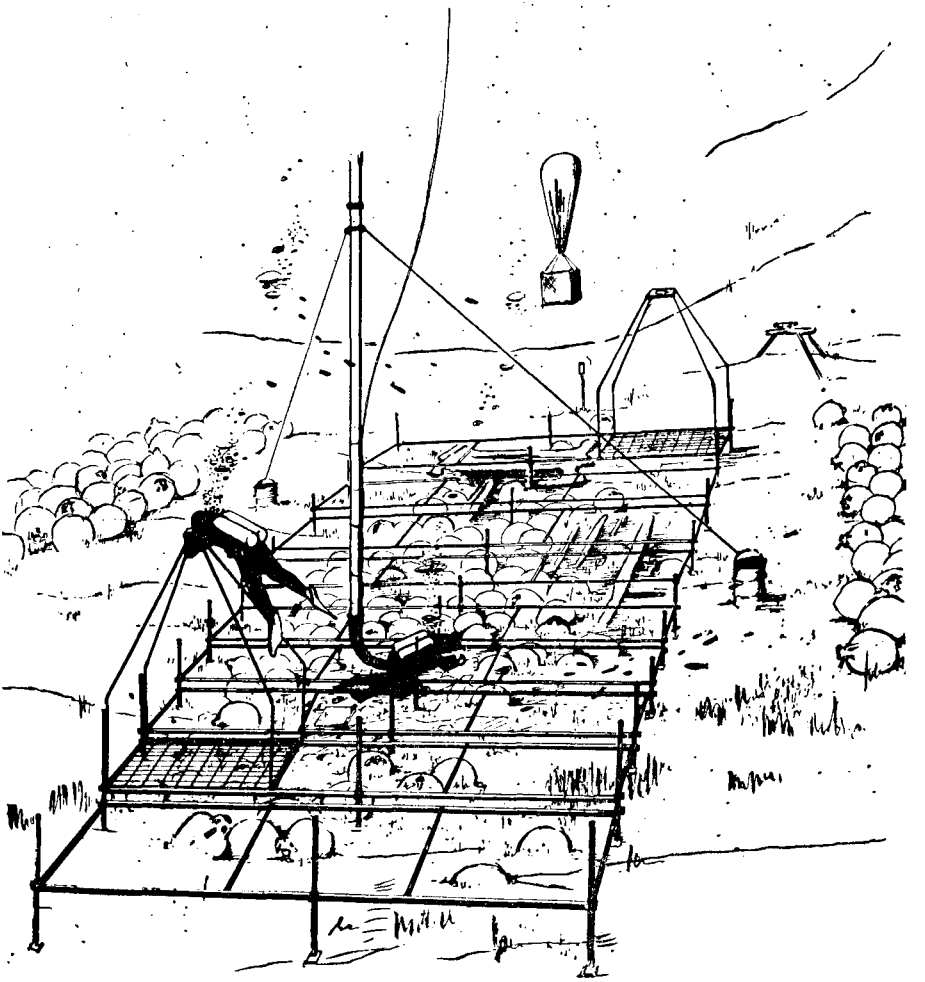

FIGURE 3.

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allows most of the sand to be carried away by the current, but coarse sand and small objects are trapped and fall into a bag attached beneath the basket. The bag is raised whenever full and the sand within is carefully inspected on land.

The Byzantine wreck is still being excavated, but already much has been learned. The hull was filled with a cargo of nearly one thousand wine jars, mostly large globular amphoras, stacked in several layers. Across the bow lay six iron anchors with a seventh just off the starboard side. Toward the stern of the ship was found a flat, depressed area with scattered roof tiles that had covered the ship's cabin, and just aft of this was the crew's large water jar. Beneath the tiles were found the personal belongings of the captain. A small hoard of gold coins, all dated to the reign of the Emperor Heraclius (610-641), gives us a fairly solid date for the sinking of the ship and, therefore, dates the objects found in it. This would make the tableware from the cabin, including plates, pitchers, cups, bowls, jars and cooking pots, probably the best-dated collection of pottery from that century. A set of silver-inlaid bronze weights, a whetstone and a stone mortar show how little the belongings of a sea merchant had changed in nearly two millennia. Thirteen terra-cotta lamps, in a style often dated two centuries earlier, now provide a fixed date for others of their type. A censer and cross in bronze and a cauldron and tray in copper also came to light. Two bronze steelyards for weighing cargo were found with chains and hooks in perfect condition. The bar of the larger was decorated at its ends with bronze animal heads, and its counterweight was a lead-filled bronze bust of Athena. A Greek inscription on this steelyard gives us the name of its owner: George Senior Sea Captain. A small glass medallion, with a cruciform monogram of the name Theodore, suggests the name of a second member of the crew.

All of these finds could have been turned up quickly by any diver, but much information would have been lost. The wood of the hull and scattered traces of wood from the rigging are now pinned in place on the packed sand of the seabed with thousands of sharpened bicycle spokes. A restoration, based on plans and sec-

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tions of these pieces, will give the first information regarding the details of Byzantine ship construction. Because the positions of the fallen roof tiles had been plotted to the centimeter, and the angle at which the keel lies had been measured, it will even be possible to estimate the height and position of the cabin by measuring the distance between the tiles and the keel; the tiles themselves will give us the size of the cabin. All of the iron nails and spikes have long since disappeared, but iron-oxide shells remain; plaster casts taken of the hollow interiors, when the shells are sawed in half, reproduce perfectly the original shapes and sizes of the missing iron pieces.

Such work is slow and laborious, but well worth the effort. Almost any object made by ancient man was likely to have been transported by sea. Even the architectural members of temples and churches have been found as cargo on sunken ships. Seldom are archaeologists offered material in such perfectly dated contexts on land, and seldom has the material been so well preserved against the destruction of men themselves. It is hoped that patience and care will be used in bringing these findings to light.

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The Hoarder

HELEN BEVINGTON

This to hoard unheard,
Heard unheeded, leaves me a lonely began.
—Gerard Manley Hopkins

A beginner, unable to end
The beginning, is a lonely began,
A hoarder of words unheard,
Unheeded, novice and learner,
Still at the outset, still a beholder

Of golden coins in his keeping,
The heavenhoard, earthlovely treasure—
A hidden-of-heart beginner
Of words, still at the beginning,
Still at death still a lonely began.

HELEN BEVINGTON's most recent volume, a collection of prose and poetry, is *When Found, Make a Verse Of*. Her previous appearances in the SCHOLAR include "The American Scholar," a poem written for the fifteenth anniversary of the magazine in 1946. Mrs. Bevington is associate professor of English at Duke University.

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Mencken Remembered

PHILIP M. WAGNER

ANY MAN OF LETTERS has a right to a dormant period, and it usually sets in as soon as the outburst of obituary notices has died down. It is a time when the durability of what a man has written is tested, without anyone's quite knowing that the test is going on. The process is a little like the digestion of what seemed, when eaten, to be a good meal. It has to be slept off before one can be sure. Henry Mencken died only seven years ago, in 1956; and his dormant period has been much disturbed by speeches, memorial services, paperback anthologies and other such extensions of the obituary ritual. Why not leave him alone for a while?

To this there is a reasonable answer. It is that the dormancy of the Mencken corpus began years before his death. Although he died only seven years ago, he had suffered the tragic stroke that robbed him of the ability to read and write, and so cut him short, in November of 1948, better than fourteen years ago. By the time he actually quit this earth, his dormant period as a man of letters had pretty well run its course, and he had begun to be spoken of as a man whose work was here to stay.

In time we will begin to have revaluations of his work as a critic, a polemist, a humorist, a philologist, a whatnot. For my part, I offer something more modest, something that might perhaps be called a worm's eye view of Mencken. I think that if we had them we might value accounts of the impact of Shakespeare on the senses of his young contemporaries at the peak of his writing life. We know little or nothing of what he meant to the people who dur-

PHILIP M. WAGNER is editor of the Baltimore *Sun*. He writes: "I lead the normal sedentary life of a newspaperman involved in the editorial-writing part of our trade, plus occasional excursions into the 'real' world and a couple of hours a day in vineyard or *chais* at Boordy Vineyard, our home in Riderwood. Wine-growing is for me a necessary change of pace from newspaper work.

"This piece had its beginning as a Regents' Lecture delivered on the Davis and Berkeley campuses of the University of California. I fear that there may be too much autobiography in it, but that seemed essential to the purpose."

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ing his lifetime trooped to hear his combination of lofty poetry and low comedy. Mencken is by way of becoming a minor classic. Hence, with diffidence, I offer these remarks on the Mencken phenomenon and what it meant to the generation that pupated at the peak of it some forty years ago.

We of that generation got our first bites of Mencken out of the old *Smart Set* magazine that he edited and largely wrote under various pseudonyms with George Jean Nathan. From that time until now I have never turned back to look at the *Smart Set* again, and the memory of early adolescence is such a merciful blur that I cannot remember how I first came upon it, or where, or what I read in it. What it did to me was to deposit an awareness that writers are not necessarily dead people, and that one of them named H. L. Mencken was very much alive and dealt in a live language that pricked and enchanted with its repeated demonstrations that the way one says it can be as important as what one says.

On squeaking into college in the fall of 1921, I made the agreeable discovery that a good many others were absorbing this man Mencken, too. By then his name was synonymous with a book called *Prejudices.* These books of *Prejudices*—now long since out of print—went to six volumes. We lapped them up. The stuff in them was belligerent, and marvelously comic, and made hash of a range of eternal verities that we were still not old enough to have learned to accept as eternal. Going back to the *Prejudices* now, it is easy to see why they are out of print and likely to remain so except for selections. At the time, Mencken was battling live adversaries. He fought so well that when these books are reread a third of a century later he seems for the most part to be battling ghosts.

I remember my introduction to his book, *The American Language,* another sort of experience but at least as exhilarating. It was in fact the second edition that I stumbled onto as a freshman, not the first, and I read it evenings during the winter of 1921-22 sitting up at a table in the library reading room. (This is the most horrible of all ways to read, for me anyway. Reading is done best with the feet on a level with the head, or higher, so that the brain can be kept well supplied with blood.) For anyone beginning to tune in on language, and its power, and the ways of putting it together, this book was tremendous stuff, even when taken sitting up

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straight with all the blood drained out of the head. The discussion of American dialects was a revelation, and best of all was the juicy comedy of his grammar of the American vulgate—a huge joke and yet the first serious effort to fit language like "I ain't done nothing" and "You gotta go thataway because that's the onlyest way they is to go" into a formal grammatical framework.

We know that *The American Language* was in its origins partly a joke on the linguistic pundits. But by the second edition it had already, in spite of Mencken's continued insistence to the contrary, become scholarship with a capital S and an enterprise that he turned back to continually as long as he wrote. It was then and is today one of those books that sticks with a new reader for life.

It is hard to describe the way we felt, I mean our generation on the campuses, about Mencken. For one thing he gave us an attitude, an easy way to feel superior, which is to say that he gave us a bit of emotional security. He imparted the sense of power, false without doubt, that is a by-product of early skepticism. How easy it was to question any proposition and to experiment with turning it inside out or upside down—and the more firmly accepted it was, how much the easier! A great deal of his persuasiveness, I think, was owing to a consistent trait of his style, which somehow managed to flatter the young reader no matter what was being done to the beliefs this reader had previously held sacred or accepted without question. Mencken, however he managed to do it, always took care to put the reader on Mencken's side. He shook the dust from literature. He persuaded us that good writing didn't have to follow old models although it might take the best from them. He knocked down a whole shooting gallery full of sacred literary sheep and cows. But he didn't stop at that: he talked about new men and pulled us to them. He even made us sensitive, for life, to the differences between good printing and bad. All of his books were well made; and I think of the appearance of the *American Mercury,* the first issue, which showed up in January, 1924. The mixture of intellectual high jinks and typographical chastity in Garamond type made it, for us, a magazine to be hung onto like a book.

Yet for most of that generation the rage for Mencken faded fairly rapidly, I suppose. I will not say that in my case it died on my

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graduation in 1925, but it did fall off sharply. Mencken began to yield diminishing returns. There was a living to make in a strange town. There were other distractions.

Looking back on it, I think there is something almost cruel in that generation's abrupt dropping of Mencken. He had done a prodigious job of surgery. Our generation accepted this as a gift, and for the most part proceeded to forget the giver.

Imagine my astonishment, then, on making a connection with the *Sunpapers* of Baltimore in early 1930, to learn that in Baltimore he was shining as brightly as ever, and that he was commonly accepted as one of the two men who, in the possibly limited view of the citizens of Maryland, really mattered. (The other was Albert Cabell Ritchie, then the Governor and assumed by every thinking citizen of the Free State to be a shoo-in to follow Herbert Hoover as President of the United States.)

But there was no reason why Mencken should have lost his glow for the *Sun* and Baltimore. What we had missed on our Middle Western campuses was that our critic of critics of critics was a sort of juggler who kept several careers in the air at the same time. By the thirties he had almost abandoned that of literary critic, but that was only one. The life he was most constant to had always been that of newspaperman. Following the pattern of our Federal system, our press is essentially provincial in this country, and it is one of the facts of American journalism that except for a handful of syndicated columnists and exhibitionists the reputation of newspapermen here is mainly local, and even the national and international reputation of most of our really superior newspapers is based largely on hearsay rather than on actual reading. In Maryland Mencken's reputation as a critic—which was the main role in which most non-Marylanders knew him—was only incidental to his much bigger local reputation as a newspaperman.

The fidelity of a newspaperman to his calling is a curious thing and not entirely rational. The satisfactions are infrequent, and fleeting. It was not entirely rational in Mencken's case, but it was real and it was unshakable. For those who may be curious about this sense of vocation so often found among newspapermen, let me recommend the chapter called, "In the Footsteps of Gutenberg," which is a part of his book of childhood memories, *Happy Days*.

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For young Henry's eighth Christmas, in 1888, his father had ordered from the old Baltimore firm of J. F. W. Dorman a Baltimore No. 10 Self-Inker Printing Press. Its printing chase or frame was only three by three and a half inches, but that provided enough area to initiate young Henry into the miracles that can be passed by putting bits and pieces of type together. Under the spell of this toy he followed a familiar sequence, from printing ghastly business cards for his father to setting up a neighborhood newspaper that died unlamented after two or three issues. Thousands of us have followed the same route, if with less sensational ultimate results.

Here is the way Mencken describes the effect on him of the No. 10 Self-Inker:

> Though my press was a poor thing and my type gradually wore out . . . my enthusiasm for printing did not die, and even when a rage for photography and then for chemistry began to challenge it, in my early teens, it managed to continue a sturdy undercover existence. When, on my Father's death, as I was 18, I was free at last to choose my trade in the world, I chose newspaper work without any hesitation whatever, and, save when the scent of a passing garbage cart has revived my chemistry libido, I have never regretted my choice. More than once I have slipped out of daily journalism to dally in its meretricious suburbs, but I have always returned repentant and relieved.

Thus it was with the young Mencken, a reporter at eighteen chasing police news for the old *Baltimore Herald,* city editor at twenty-two, managing editor at twenty-four. Those excitements are all set out in his second book of reminiscences, *Newspaper Days,* which closes with the collapse of the *Herald* under his triumphant editorship and his first employment by the *Sunpapers* in 1906.

So in the *Sunpapers* office in 1930, when I first entered it full of doubts and hesitations but very certain that I wanted to be there, Henry Mencken was a great man, however much his stock had fallen among the adolescent literati of the campuses. As a newspaperman who did a weekly editorial-page article for the *Evening Sun* and undertook frequent special assignments, and in many ways set the style and mood of the *Sunpapers* as editorial adviser to the publisher: that was how I first saw him, and came to know him. He was then fifty and I was twenty-six—a gap that, as I now realize, was vastly larger to me than to him, and that I never sought, and never really wanted, to close. It is good for the sanity of all of us to have

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someone whom we continue to think of as Mister even though we address him by his given name.

I came to know Mencken as a person *after* I had fully recovered from his effect as a literary shooting star. My relationship with him thus had a quality different from that of his intimates and contemporaries. It was a compound of junior friendship coupled with gratitude for what he had meant in the past, vast respect for him as a workman still unrivaled in his favorite medium, and a certain detachment.

Every encounter with this man carried an electric charge. As novice member of the editorial staff I shared an office with the editor's secretary. You could set your watch by Mencken's arrival at 2 P.M. for a session with Hamilton Owens, then the editor, and Harry Black, a man who came as close to the ideal of the perfect newspaper owner as anyone is likely to get. Mencken was a stocky little man, with popping blue eyes and a figure that he loved to describe as "matronly." You could hear him thump briskly up the hall, and his two o'clock greeting was an invariable "Good morning." This contempt for the noonday dividing line between morning and afternoon was such a jolt to me on the first day of my employment that the very next day, to my astonishment, I found myself doing the same thing—and I have been doing it ever since.

Having said "Good morning," he passed into the editor's office and closed the door behind him, and from then on what one heard was a muffled uproar. From time to time I got in as a fourth, and later I heard him in many other sorts of gatherings. He was the supreme talker, not a spring but a torrent. He was equally fascinated by reason and unreason, and happiest when taking the latter apart. No one who might happen to lie across the path of what was on his mind could expect to be spared; and yet in all the years I heard him talking I never once heard him expose a person present to humiliation or ridicule. Even so, one effect of being with him in a group—in an editorial meeting, at dinner or on occasions that required him to stand up and deliver what he called a harangue—was to feel acutely one's own sluggishness of mind and always afterward to wonder what it could be, what biochemical mystery it was, that made this man so different from the rest of us.

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There was a broad streak of mischief in Mencken. He was forever cooking up imaginary organizations, having fake handbills printed, inventing exercises in pure nonsense. I remember a fake business card that he got some job printer to execute for him and that gave him great joy. It was supposed to be the card of a rural Southern newspaper editor. Along the bottom of the card, which he handed out to all and sundry, was the legend, "Bring us your problems. We will complicate them." Mencken was not entirely respectful of the role of the press in this republic.

Off and on over many years he sealed his letters with a gummed and perforated stamp that bore the legend: "Welcome to Eudowood." Eudowood is the local tuberculosis sanitorium. Along with Hamilton Owens and several other conspirators—remember, those were the innocent days when minstrel shows were still popular and *Little Black Sambo* had not yet been condemned as immoral and replaced on the library shelves by *Lady Chatterley's Lover* and the works of Henry Miller—he was a prime mover in a mythical institution called "The American Academy of Arts and Sciences, Colored." This institution existed for the single purpose of offering honorary degrees to pretentious fatheads. In the Academy's invitations to accept the degree of "Doctor of Laws, Colored," there were elaborate stipulations as to the proper regalia for the ceremony, with prices discreetly indicated for the hood, the gown, the cap and all the rest. Once in a while they hooked a trout and played him for a while with supplementary instructions.

Mencken and his band of conspirators were behind a fake institution known as "The Loyal Legion of American Mothers," which announced in its subtitle that it was "dedicated to avoiding foreign entanglements and keeping American womanhood pure." Candidates for the honors at the disposal of this sorority, as Hamilton Owens reminds me, were always eminent, stupid, physically unattractive and susceptible to flattery.

I recall the mischief Henry Mencken made when the Newspaper Guild first swam into the consciousness of the management of the *Sunpapers*. Like all newspapermen of good faith, Mencken had long fumed at the low estate of the journalistic rank and file. He insisted, in that hyperbolic way of his, that the average newspaper publisher stood somewhere below the baboon in terms of

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intelligence and morality, and he was for any movement that might defend the working newspaperman against exploitation by such lesser primates. But when the Newspaper Guild made the fatal mistake (in his view) of accepting copy boys, elevator operators, telephone girls and cleaning women as members entitled to a vote equal to that of a working newspaperman, his gorge rose and his enthusiasm fell. Thus when the Newspaper Guild first approached the *Sunpapers* with a proposal for a contract, Henry Mencken was singled out to be the negotiator for the management. He drew up a tentative contract and at the first negotiating meeting he read it aloud. It was larded with references to "the gentlemen of the press," "the aforesaid gentlemen," "the gentlemen known as the parties of the first part," and so forth. When he had finished reading this tentative contract, one of the Guild negotiators cleared his throat and said:

"Mr. Mencken, ah, what is the reason for the repeated use of the word 'gentlemen'?"

Mencken was quick on the reply. "I used the word," he said, "in order to have something to concede when the bargaining gets tough."

Another example. Throughout his life he had a total devotion to a Baltimore institution, now extinct, called the Saturday Night Club, which met (as one might guess) on Saturday nights. It met to pound out chamber music. It was an oddly mixed crowd, since the passion for chamber music recognizes no caste system. But mistakes can be made, and when a misfit got involved Mencken promptly sent out a notice that the Saturday Night Club had ceased to exist for an indefinite period pending a "reorganization." In the next mail there was an announcement of a reorganization meeting to be held the following Saturday evening at the usual time and place. Everyone got the notice except the misfit.

In those days Henry Mencken was a prime mover in a series of luncheons in that charming room, long since demolished, that was called the Board Room of the *Sunpapers*. One time he would bring in the Gish sisters, Lillian and Dorothy, probably the two most delightful spinsters (because they so obviously enjoyed their double role of being both spinisterly and beautiful) who ever existed. Another time it was Ellery Sedgwick, whose medium was the *Atlantic*

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Monthly and who in the thirties was the dean of American magazine editors, or Gertrude Lawrence, Maxwell Anderson, Noel Coward, Alex Woollcott or any one of a hundred figures in the bouncing theater of that time or the equally lively literary renaissance. One day his guest was the Catholic Archbishop of Oklahoma, fresh from his mission in the Bible Belt, a padre with the spare build of a cowpoke and a taste for heretics like Mencken. But Henry was one he never got his teeth into. Mencken had an equal taste for the clergy.

I think that his extraordinary output as a letter writer was an extension of this social exuberance. Mencken's diligence as a correspondent has already become legendary. It is commonly said that there exist still, somewhere or other, at least fifty thousand Mencken letters. I talked about this recently with his brother August. August disagreed. Not long ago he made a computation based solely on the number of letters addressed to Mencken in connection with *The American Language* that are held in the collection of the New York Public Library—all of which Mencken had answered as a matter of course. August figured the total of those letters at somewhere around sixty-five thousand. But that is only a beginning. In his computation August had deliberately excluded ephemeral letters of the sort that were not prompted by a letter received and did not necessarily call for a reply. As a junior editorial writer, and later as an editor, I know that I received hundreds of notes from him—I would not dignify them all by saying that they were letters. And he would never have thought of me as a correspondent. The uncanny thing about these frequently routine notes is that not a single one of them failed to rise above the ordinary, to offer a phrase that caused one to set it aside for the time being if not to hold it indefinitely. I confess that I held none of mine. When we moved to a new building ten years ago I cleaned my desk, and all these collector's items—if you want to call them that—went into the wastebasket. His letters were a sort of extension of his capacity for conversation, and I thought of them that way, not as icons.

This exuberance and this boisterousness and this extraordinary diligence in correspondence were clearly compensatory—the obverse of a man who never did rid himself of his sense of loneliness in spite of an exceptionally close family life and an intense loyalty to his friends. His philosophy was the bleak and lonely one of an

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agnostic. One can dig up any number of variants on his dismal view of the business of living. The most succinct and somber that I can put my hands on is in one of his letters recently published: "My notion is that all the larger human problems are insoluble and that life is quite meaningless—a spectacle without purpose or moral. I detest all efforts to read a moral into it."

There was constant reference in his letters and personal conversation to his loneliness. He had an intense devotion to his mother, which was quite apart from any belief that she understood what made him tick. Following the death of his mother there was the tender episode of his middle-aged marriage, which one cannot help but think was a sort of substitute for something he had lost.

His pessimism was emotional as well as rational. "The natural state of a reflective man," he once wrote, "is one of depression."

As one might suppose, the bleakness of his personal credo was reflected in a private life (contrasting with the public impression of him) of considerable austerity. He had a compulsive sense of order and routine, reflected in his work habits. When he was at home in Hollins Street, which was really most of the time, he followed a rigid routine. After breakfast he engaged himself in his correspondence from nine until eleven, with the help of Mrs. Lohrfink, his secretary for so many years. From then until noon he wrote, or he worked at the files related to his writing. Following lunch he made his trip to the editorial offices of the *Sunpapers,* and for the subsequent hour and a half the world saw him as a gay companion. By 3:30 he was normally back in Hollins Street, at his writing or his files. Five o'clock was his time for turning to review books and other such reading, flat on the sofa. He was a rapid reader, but not a very tolerant one, and in less than an hour he was usually asleep. Then the faithful Lohrfink returned with the day's correspondence ready to be signed and stuffed into envelopes. Mencken always licked the stamps. He might then go out and walk down to the corner to put them into the box, or he might do that later. This was his steadiest concession to exercise. He rarely left the house without a handful of letters to be mailed. Then somewhere around 6:15 supper was served. By 7:45 his main work, which is to say his writing, began in earnest. These were the days before his marriage when his quarters were on the third floor of Hollins Street. (On marrying he

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and Sara took an apartment on Baltimore's handsome Mt. Vernon Place, which as he explained to friends concerned for his spiritual welfare was conveniently adjacent to the Christian Science reading room, and only August stayed on in Hollins Street.)

At ten o'clock August, in his room on the floor below, heard a bang and a shout, "Let's go!" Henry and August came downstairs to the first floor and the little middle living room. They lit the fire. There was usually a glass of beer. There was random talk for maybe an hour. Mencken often claimed that his best ideas came from August; some good ones did, but the broad claim is an exaggeration, as August would be the first to insist.

At eleven o'clock, to bed. Then his serious reading began, and it is anybody's guess when it ended. But Mencken was a man who believed in order and self-discipline and it was not often, no matter what the reading might be, that he went without a full night's sleep.

That was pretty much his routine once he had emerged from adolescence. Order. Moderation. He was in no way excessive in his manner of living. As a small example, and in spite of his own racy conversation, he detested routine dirty stories and avoided persons addicted to them. He has confessed that from adolescence on he was always a "cagey" drinker. To those who associate him with a violent opposition to prohibition, and hence with the intemperance of those years, it is worth knowing that he was cautious throughout his mature life about the effects of alcohol although he had a great fondness for malt liquor, German wines and claret. He acquired that caution from, of all people, a fire department surgeon, when he was a young reporter covering a fire at the turn of the century—a wise man who took the trouble to instruct him that alcohol is not a stimulant but a depressant, which may seem to warm you when covering a fire on a winter night but in fact does the opposite. Let me quote Mencken writing a half-century later on the warning of that fire department surgeon on the use and misuse of alcohol:

> His words continue to lurk in my mind to this day. In consequence I employ it of an evening, not to hooch up my faculties but to let them down after work. Not in years have I ever written anything with so much as a glass of beer in my system. My compositions, I gather, sometimes seem boozy to the nobility and gentry, but they are actually done as soberly as those of William Dean Howells.

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Along with his sense of order and his personal discipline went a constant preoccupation with health. Ill health was to him the source of most evil, the prime cause of incompetence, of personal insecurity, of most failures to make a go of life, and clear proof that Jahweh was an impish fellow. Ill health was never far from his mind. I remember a typical statement as he came through the office one day at the height of the hay fever season. "God nodded," he said, "when he designed my nose." He was always retreating to Johns Hopkins Hospital in quest of repairs that may or may not have been necessary.

Consistent with all this was a passionate distaste for slack workmanship. My best insight into this characteristic was during the spring of 1938, when some reorganization of the editorial management of the *Sunpapers* was in progress. The editor of the *Evening Sun* had moved forward to the *Sun*. Mencken undertook to sit in as editor of the *Evening Sun* for an interim of several months. It was an uproarious period. He brought with him a Princeton beer jacket which he put on every morning at ten o'clock on descending to the composing room to make up the editorial page. He installed a polished brass spittoon. (He did chew tobacco.) With our help the editorial page then executed a series of fairly startling editorial stunts. There was the famous time when we gave over the editorial page to a rectangle of several million dots, each one of them supposed to represent a jobholder supported by the taxpayer. There was the editorial that began one day in the upper left-hand corner of the page and did not end until it reached the lower right-hand corner, described by him with some pride as the longest and dullest editorial ever written. There was the time on the death of the distinguished Johns Hopkins medical artist, Max Broedel, when we published a three-column reproduction of one of Broedel's masterpieces, a detailed drawing of a diseased kidney.

During this period the Mencken instinct for order in all things was equally manifest. It was shown in the laborious job of choosing a real stenographer, which is to say someone who could keep up with his machine-gun dictation. There was his daily anxiety about the slaphappy business of assembling sufficient material to fill a page. He could never quite believe that on any such basis a newspaper would appear on schedule. His own solution was to go home

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in early afternoon, fall back into his regular routine, and bring in his editorial copy promptly the next morning ready for the printers.

As for the contributions of the rest of us, here came his total intolerance of any writing not first-class. Nearly everything we did went into the wastebasket, with the result that his anxiety about a daily crisis was justified, daily. We solved this by sneaking things into type ahead of time. When makeup time came, he had no choice but to use them.

And yet his distress over the incompetence of his subordinates—and I may say that each of us displayed incompetence of a different sort—had the effect of increasing his personal kindness and courtesy to the very people who were driving him wild. This curious and probably unique episode in newspaper journalism wound up with Mencken's retreat to the Johns Hopkins Hospital for several weeks of recuperation. For the little group of men who had long since acquired their second wind, and knew perfectly well that the paper always comes out somehow, this mad sprint had been something fantastic and altogether delightful. I know of only one reference to it in what Mencken has written. In the closing paragraph of his book, *Newspaper Days,* he has this to say, after confessing that the editing part of newspaper work had never really been his dish: "Since 1910, save for a brief and unhappy interlude in 1938, I have never had a job which involved the control of other men's work or any responsibility for it." The five of us who were involved (four still surviving) don't remember it that way; and if unhappiness was the residue remaining in his memory we blame it on that first slight heart attack of his, which struck him during that time and gave him his first real intimation of mortality.

When it came to friendships and even casual encounters with individuals, Mencken was another sort of man from the Mencken the world thought it knew. I have never known anyone more *considerate,* if I may, by the use of that mawkish word, expose him to posthumous embarrassment. I think the base of this was a generalized pity for the human race, caught in the act of living and with no notion better than the mush the theologians supply of the Why of it. I have seen him react as though with physical pain to news of needlessly tangled and unhappy domestic relationships. He was dismayed by personal disloyalties, although he loved an open scrap.

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He was certainly the most industrious hospital-visitor in all history. No one with a valid call on his advice or solace was ever disappointed; and any sign that good work might be gestating in a young staff member brought him running. For instance, the pains he took to find a publisher for a book I had tackled were way beyond the call of duty. He happened through the office one day just after the first printed copy of that book had arrived in the mail, and he found me admiring it. He gave a whoop, and then said, quietly: "It's your first. You'll never feel this way again." And the next day as he charged into the office he was carrying a shirt box under his arm, tied up with string. He took my scissors and opened it. In the box were thousands of wine labels (my book had had to do with wine) that he had collected over a good many years as another might collect postage stamps. Many of these were association items carrying an astonishing display of literary autographs, souvenirs of bottles cheerfully shared with friends here and abroad. He thrust the whole collection on me saying he could think of no better caretaker.

This is not the place or the time for a critical analysis of Mencken's work. But for those who may be concerned in a practical way with writing, I can offer a few words on his methods.

He was normally a writer of great speed. It would be reasonable to call this a result of his early training as a reporter. (Nothing frees the power of expression quite so effectively as the need to meet a deadline.) But it would also be false. Deadline newspaper writing is rapid because it cheats, depending heavily on clichés and stock phrases. Mencken thought in prose, and spoke in prose. The transfer direct onto paper was easy for him, and must have been from the beginning.

He dictated a good bit to the faithful Lohrfink and to his other secretary, Lustgarten, at the *American Mercury* end of things in New York, but only when style was secondary.

The stuff with style was banged out on a portable typewriter, and his copy was always clean.

He was meticulous on fact, and rarely caught out in a mistake, as I can testify from having handled his Monday *Evening Sun* articles for a decade or more. He was not so meticulous on spelling. He was fairly ruthless as an editor when it came to style. I remember

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my astonishment on reading an entirely new lead paragraph when I saw proofs of an *American Mercury* article I had done. But he was meticulous in his respect for the ideas and emphases of an author. He was meticulous, too, on what most of his contributors, not being money-minded, must have thought the minor matter of copyrighting. Transfer of copyright to the author came in the mail along with the payment for any contribution.

On the origin of his style he has given a few hints. In one of his letters he makes a bow to Huxley (Thomas, that is) whom he called "the greatest of all masters of orderly exposition. He taught me the importance of giving to every argument a simple structure." He acknowledges his debt, also, to "an anonymous editorial writer in the *New York Sun* circa 1900. He taught me the value of apt phrases." Considering the steady lambasting that Mencken gave to the editorial writing fraternity throughout his lively years, as an order of men lying even lower than clergymen, college professors and politicians, and perhaps almost as low as newspaper publishers, this is a revelation. His objection, one discovers, was not to editorial writers, but to incompetent editorial writers. My own feeling is that the main source of his style goes straight back to the second book he ever read, when he was eight years old: Mark Twain's *Huckleberry Finn*. If you haven't read it recently, let me commend it for another reading. From there, I believe, came qualities that made Mencken the American humorist second only to Mark Twain himself. There you will find the origin of the hyperbole, the extravagance, the unfailing sense of the ridiculous that are so characteristic of him. His style does derive partly from Huxley and that anonymous *New York Sun* editorial writer, but most of all, I think, it was built, although probably not consciously, on Twain.

He had his own stylistic devices, of course. I have mentioned one already: his care to put the reader, by implied flattery and in other shameless ways, on his side of the argument. I will not try to make a catalog of them. Let me mention one other. He learned early in the game that the public responds best to a fight, in writing as in almost everything else. To be bellicose in writing seemed to him to be the one best way of snatching the interest of a reader. This gave him difficulty when he had occasion to bestow praise. He solved the difficulty characteristically. "When I have to praise a

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writer," he explained, "I usually do it by attacking his enemies."

As to his writing in general and what he wanted to accomplish, let me add only a sentence or two, and these again are his: "All my work hangs together. Whether it appears to be burlesque, or serious criticism, or mere casual controversy, it is always directed against one thing: unwarranted pretension. It always seeks to expose a false pretense, to blow up a wobbly axiom, to uncover a sham virtue."

As I began to think over the shape that these notes might take I happened to run into August, Mencken's surviving younger brother whom I have already mentioned. We were talking about Henry's (Harry's, to August) work habits. This led logically enough to an evening in the Mencken house in Hollins Street where August now lives alone. This is the row house, with the white marble steps that are a Baltimore trademark, where Mencken was born in 1880 and lived until the brief middle-aged idyll of his marriage to Sara Hardt in 1930. It is the house to which he returned after her death in 1935, coming back "completely dashed and dismayed" to pick up the broken pieces with his brother and put them together again. It is also the house where, after a brief hiatus, he proceeded to build another writing career entirely detached from his career as literary critic or that of magazine editor, book editor or newspaperman, and to find a distinctly new and different group of readers. These were the years when he worked on the trilogy of reminiscences of Baltimore life which I have quoted from, and which, along with *The American Language,* are the lasting things.

This was my first visit in years to the Hollins Street house. There is very little change, except that there are echoes now that one didn't hear before. There is the front parlor much as usual, with its set pieces so characteristic of comfortable urban life in Baltimore in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Behind that is the middle living room, behind that the narrow dining room and then the kitchen. We went out through the kitchen to the narrow brick-walled garden, into the dark. The arbor was still there. I promised August a few grape vines for next spring to replace the clematis. The big Kieffer pear tree was loaded: it had gone on to great vigor and fruitfulness since Mencken's death. On the wall there was a handmade sun dial, August's workmanship.

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We went back to the living room. There, still, was the heavy walnut secretary that Henry's father, August, Sr., had had made for a hundred dollars back in the eighties by the old Baltimore cabinet-making firm of Potthast. In the glass-fronted shelves above the writing part were those same volumes of Mark Twain that the "larval bookworm," young Henry, had chewed at from the age of seven years on. In the front of each book was Henry's bookplate. During his life Mencken had three bookplates, first a large one, then a medium-sized one, then a small one not much larger than a postage stamp, all otherwise the same. August tells me that throughout Henry's life, except for the most trivial books that were glanced at and quickly discarded, no book of Mencken's ever escaped a bookplate. It is a small sign of his lifetime absorption in books. A book was never a casual thing to him. He knew the hope and labor that goes into every one, including the failures and even the phonies. He respected them, even, I think, the phonies.

On the inside cover of each of those in the secretary a little typed note is pasted, giving the book's history. In one, for example: "This book was given to Anna Abhau [Mencken's mother] by August Mencken, father of H. L. Mencken, just before their marriage in 1879." More symptoms of that sense of order that ruled Mencken's mind. In another volume, Mark Twain's *Following the Equator*, are the signatures of Henry Louis Mencken and Chas. Edw. Mencken, followed by the notation in Henry's hand, "Xmas 1897, to Father. Father died in 1899." This volume, like the others qualified to receive it, carries the imprint of a small rubber stamp saying, "First Edition."

On the other side of the living room is a more pretentious mahogany glass-fronted bookcase, and in this are various sets that were Mencken's: the works of Herbert Spencer in the famous Appleton series of reprints, which I had known so well as a child in my own home and which included all the classics of nineteenth century rationalism, Darwin, Huxley, Tyndall, Spencer and so on; also the Variorum Shakespeare, the complete works of Nietzsche in translation, a deluxe edition of Cabell and all of Oscar Wilde. Surrounded by these things, August and I and the third member of the party, Hamilton Owens, raised our ceremonial glasses of beer and talked of times gone by.

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Then we went upstairs to the front study. It had been his mother's room and after her death his sister Gertrude's. But Gertrude, in a burst of independence that quite floored Henry and August, had refused to come back to Hollins Street to take care of them after Sara's death, and so this most spacious room in the narrow row house became Henry's study for the last quarter of his life. His big desk, really a table, faces into the room, backed by three windows with wooden half-shutters that give out onto Hollins Street and Union Square. I stood looking out of one of the windows on that mild October night. This has become a sort of hillbilly neighborhood, and in daylight the square is shabby. But the trees were still in full leaf, and the light of a street lamp put the old rococo bandstand into silhouette. It was, if one wanted to see it that way, a glimpse back three-quarters of a century into a way of life entirely gone. In his last years Mencken spent hours sitting by these windows drawing what pleasure he could from the prospect.

In a book case on one wall was the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (the Fourteenth edition, oddly enough, and not the classic Eleventh) and alongside it the old *Chambers Encyclopaedia* that Mencken knew almost by heart; beneath was the *New International* (which of course is the direct descendent of *Chambers*) and beside it the *Catholic Encyclopedia* and the *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics* to remind him how much and how little there is that all men agree on. There were a few other such indispensable reference books. Between two of the windows, handy to his desk chair when turned slightly, was a special bookcase, narrow and with twenty shelves and made by Potthast a half-century after the one downstairs. He had had it made to hold the twenty volumes of the *Oxford English Dictionary* (the first volume published in 1880, the last one I think in 1929), each volume to lie horizontal on its separate shallow shelf, an unwitting confession of his absorption in the English as well as the American language. A minor tragedy in the orderly Mencken life was the later appearance of the twenty-first volume containing both introduction and supplement. There was no shelf for it. I don't know just where he kept that volume. This curious bookcase, so much more like a music case, is empty now, the dictionary itself having gone to one of the various public libraries that Mencken was devoted to and among which he distributed most of

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his books and papers. On the desk are odd trinkets. On the opposite wall there is a glassed-in case of carved figurines. There is also on a pedestal a glass bell containing a formal composition of dried flowers. It is a companion to another bell downstairs containing stuffed birds. These had been Sara's, who had a taste for the Victorian.*

This was the room where Henry Mencken spent much of his last years, after that sadly inappropriate thrombosis that robbed him of the ability to read and write. It was a misfortune as plausibly ascribable to a strong-minded and vengeful deity as that which robbed Beethoven of his sense of hearing, but worse in a way since Beethoven did go on to do some of his best things in spite of total deafness.

The illness did not incapacitate Mencken entirely. His general physical recovery was excellent. What it did was to take the Mencken out of Mencken. We all saw him occasionally, but his visits to the office after recovery were only ceremonial and full of suppressed anguish, as much for his hosts as for Mencken himself. I recall a festive occasion one spring in the early fifties when the Costume Committee of the Washington Gridiron Club came over to Baltimore to be entertained at a fairly elaborate luncheon by the *Sunpapers* people. (This is an annual ceremony of great antiquity.) Henry Mencken showed up for this, to everyone's pleasure. He was ruddy. He was lively. His eyes were bright. He had all the old manner, yet none of the substance. The cords that hold a personality together had never quite mended. During an interlude that followed a good bit of wine Mencken and I were seized with the same thought and found ourselves side by side in the washroom. I made some casual remark about the crowd from Washington and I asked him how he was feeling. "Fine," he said. "But God, why didn't the quacks let me die when they had me?" Those were the last words I heard him speak.

He did die several years later on January 25, 1956.

* I might add that in a room that August considers entirely his and that is given over mainly to a collection of rare toy steam engines that work—August is an engineer—there is a third such glass bell. Its contents are a rag-doll Santa Claus dating from August's third year, a rubber ball and set of jacks and a few other such souvenirs of his misspent youth. This and a few rare old chromos on the first floor are August's characteristically sardonic contributions to the decor.

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If You Don't Mind My Saying So. . . . . .

JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH

I don't suppose many people today read that late eighteenth-century "must," Bishop William Paley's *Natural Theology*. I never expected to and I haven't really read it. But I did have occasion to take it down from a library shelf and discover that it begins with the once unanswerable "argument from design" and presents it on the very first page via the classic watch-and-watchmaker routine. A watch is too intricate and purposeful to have merely happened. But the world—especially the world of living things—is far more intricate and more elaborately adapted to its needs. If the presence of a watch implies a watchmaker, how much more inevitably does a world imply a world-maker?

How the Bishop got from this to the thirty-nine articles or whether, indeed, he attempted to do so, I do not know. But the argument for some sort of theism must have seemed irrefutable and it is sufficient to explain why few of even the hardiest skeptics then believed less than what Deism proclaimed. Lucretius's chance meeting of atoms was simply too far-fetched even for those "who could believe anything provided only it was not in the Bible."

Bishop Paley's contemporary, Lord Monboddo, was already insisting that the orang-utan was a close relative of man and another contemporary, Erasmus Darwin, was already proclaiming: "The Great Creator of All Things has infinitely developed the works of his hands, but has at the same time stamped a certain similitude on the features of nature that demonstrates to us, that the whole is one family of one parent." But although such hardy speculations might encourage certain doubts about the Garden of Eden they left untouched the argument for theism based on the watch and the watchmaker.

The last of the eight lavishly endowed *Bridgewater Treatises* on "The Goodness of God as manifested in the Creation," appeared in 1840 or less than twenty years before Charles Darwin was supposed to have knocked the props from under that and all similar enterprises, making "the argument from design" as irrelevant as Ptolemaic astronomy. What Darwin was undertaking to prove was nothing less than simply this: A watch cannot make itself but, given time enough, organisms have performed a similar although far more astonishing feat. He made complete atheism seem for the first time a tenable creed. Add natural selection to Lucretius's chance encounter of atoms and you had something that could, in a pinch at least, be believed.

Although there were always a few, even within the ranks of official science who remained just outside the new orthodoxy (Alfred Russel Wallace himself was one), the overwhelming majority of competent scientific men merely shrugged them off as victims of an absurd residue of irrationality and took it as proved beyond dispute that the living world did indeed "just happen." Even the Deists' vague deity tended to vanish because there seemed no function left for him to perform and with him went the whole of the somewhat distantly related concept of Purpose. Evolution, so it was said, had a *tendency* toward greater elaboration. The fish *tended* to become the philosopher. But nothing *in*tended anything.

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I have read a good deal of popular and semipopular natural history and biology and I think it clear that a certain vague dissatisfaction with the complete and all-inclusive explaining away of the wonders of the living watch is commoner in respectable quarters today than it was even a generation ago. The clear demonstration of what natural selection can do, apparently all by itself, involves rather simple things like protective coloration. It is a long way from them to any one of the hundreds of all but incredible organs, instincts and behavior patterns and there seems to be an increasing tendency to doubt modestly and in a largely negative fashion that the whole process really is understood.

Those who share these modest doubts are often accused of mere wishful thinking, of merely wanting to find some hint of an escape from the blind, purposeless and meaningless universe of strict Darwinism. Perhaps I share that wish but I do not believe it is the only reason why I often find myself thinking of the problem or why that thinking has led me to the conclusion that the whole phenomenon of evolution becomes easier to credit if the process is assumed to have involved certain forces the reality of which there is far more reason (on the basis of evidence) to believe in than to reject. These processes involve that concept of Purpose (or intention) which, so it seems to me, is so often rejected out of hand because it actually is not clearly defined. There is (to put it more modishly although not necessarily more clearly) a semantic confusion. To say that Purpose may have been involved in the process of evolution may be to say any one of at least three quite different things.

The first, oldest and most common meaning of such a statement implies a transcendental power, usually personal, which is outside of and beyond everything else that exists and which directs the universe it created. This is quite precisely the watchmaker and the watch he made. A second possible meaning implies immanence rather than transcendence. The purpose assumed to exist is not outside of but inherent in the natural world; is indeed a natural, primordial part of it which has existed as long as anything has existed and is simply part of things as they are. In a sense the watch still makes itself but not so mechanically or so blindly as strict Darwinism implies. The first of these hypotheses is the one that orthodox science most vehemently repudiates and it is only slightly more tolerant of the second which it is likely to regard as little more than a second line of defense desperately constructed by a rear guard attempting to cover the rout of the superstitious before the advancing army of rationalism.

There is, however, a third possible sense in which Purpose may have played a part in evolution and it is one that seems to me to have been largely overlooked despite the fact that even the most mechanical theories of evolution would seem to suggest it. That man himself is capable of purpose in the simplest sense of the word, that he can, that is to say, adopt a means toward an end, is certainly not doubted by anyone who is not —as most orthodox evolutionists are not— wholly committed to the narrowest possible interpretation of a kind of dialectic materialism. But if man, who is himself an animal, is capable of effective intentions, why should one suppose that this is something entirely new in the universe rather than that it has always been to some extent, however slight, characteristic of living things?

Take the case of the tool that illustrates concretely the simplest form of purposefulness. It is true that there does not seem to be any exception to the oft-repeated statement that man is the only animal who *makes* tools. But other animals do *use* those that they find ready-made. Many of the primates use natural objects as instruments or weapons and tool-using is demonstrable much lower in the hierarchy, as in the two notable cases of the wasp that uses a pebble to tamp down the earth over the concealed opening of its nesting burrow and the comic pseudo-woodpecker (actually a finch) that digs insects from bark crevices with a twig just because, for some unknown reason, natural selection failed to provide him with the long slender bill characteristic of the true woodpeckers.

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One may readily grant that the step from tool-using to toolmaking is a very important one. But is there any reason for supposing that there is an absolute discontinuity between the processes involved? In both cases a means to an end is adopted and there seems to be no reason for the categorical statement that purposefulness in the simple sense of an effective intention exists in the case of one and not in the other.

Yes, reply the stubborn, there is a reason. Tool-using arose as the result of random motions and the survival value of certain chance discoveries enabled natural selection to pick them out and to fix them as instincts. But again one must ask is there any compelling reason why this should be categorically asserted? Mere trial and error plays a certain part even in the new inventions of the most advanced technology and no doubt played a larger one in the earliest stages of man's tool-making. Does not the whole concept of evolution incline one to the assumption that intention has played an increasingly important role rather than that it appeared suddenly in a world where everything else was evolving from simpler forms as the result of purely mechanical processes? The difference between the degree of intention that existed in the wasp or the finch may be as great as the difference between their brain and the human brain. But the one was nevertheless evolved from the other.

To me it seems exceedingly odd (and exceedingly inconsistent) that the more dogmatic the evolutionist the more strongly he insists upon the absolute uniqueness of man's mind while, at the same time, he indignantly rejects Alfred Wallace's stubborn insistence that this very uniqueness disproves the theory that the mind has been mechanically evolved from the mind of one of the lower animals. Only man, so orthodox evolution has often insisted, can reason in a sense utterly different from any mental process other animals are capable of; only he can have intentions. To attribute any of these things to any lower animal is to be guilty of "anthropomorphism." But if all higher things have evolved from simpler ones, then how on earth would man have evolved from these lower animals unless they were in some sense anthropomorphic?

"Evolution" and "discontinuity" are antithetical notions and I cannot explain the passion with which they have been simultaneously asserted except on the assumption that some "wishful thinking" is involved. A theory as revolutionary as Darwin's needs, if it is to be accepted, statement in the simplest and most absolute form possible. If the great role played by natural selection was to be recognized it had to be explained with the fewest possible complications. Admit Purpose at all and the need for any such theory as Darwin's would have been much less obvious. The watch and watchmaker theory would have been much less easy to rout.

But the theory of evolution, in a very broad and very inclusive sense, is no longer in danger of rejection nor is anyone likely to doubt the importance of the role played by natural selection. On the other hand, many of the difficulties that still rise (increasingly, I believe) in the minds of thoughtful people vanish if one admits no more than the, to me, very reasonable supposition that something, no more perhaps than the slight advantage bestowed by purposefulness in the simple sense of effective intention, be admitted, no matter to how slight a degree. Those who reject it categorically are not winning support for what is essential in the theory of evolution but raising doubts about it. If anything could revive the watch and watchmaker analogy it would be the belief that man is unique in possessing not merely reason but even the ability to intend. If he transcends all other animals then what can he be except a special creation? If intention is a discontinuous phenomenon then where does evolution come in? To reject it seems to me to put one right into the hands of the transcendentalist so far as man is concerned.

Much has been made in recent years of abstruse mathematical calculations intended to prove that natural selection will, in the long run, perpetuate a variation that has even a very slight survival value. But surely an equally slight push by an intention would be even more effective and I simply cannot see why if enormous intelligence is

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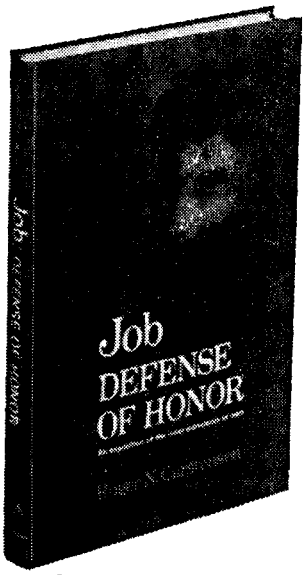

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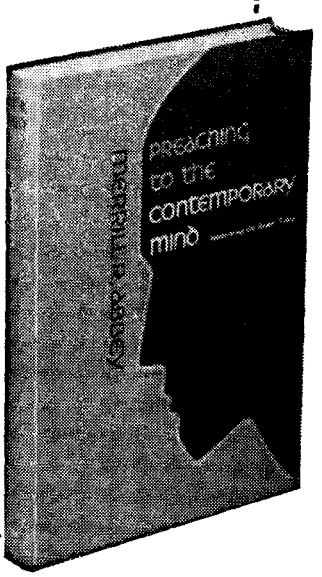

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assumed in the case of man descended from the lower animal it is not reasonable rather than unreasonable to assume the possibility that such a push exists. Evidence against such an assumption is purely negative. "We cannot find it and don't know how we could demonstrate it," reply the mechanists; but that is a practical difficulty not a disproof and I suspect that the real reason for the dogmatic assertion that it does not exist is simply the result of a reluctance to admit that what would be hard to investigate may, nevertheless, be worth considering.

T. H. Huxley himself once wrote: "The materialistic position . . . is as utterly devoid of justification as the most baseless of theological dogmas. . . . But with a view to the progress of science, the materialistic terminology is in every way preferable."

For the time being he was certainly right. But unless you take the position that what is most fruitful pro tem is eternally true this is not conclusive. Newtonian physics was certainly fruitful but the time came when some parts of it had to be abandoned if further truths were to be established. No doubt the fact that some of the most remarkable examples of what seemed to our ancestors proof of "design" occur among plants and among the very primitive animal organisms where the push if it existed at all must have been very slight. But there is no conclusive argument against the assumption that it existed from the beginning and increased slowly as time went on rather than that it emerged discontinuously at the moment when a primate became a man.

Two twentieth-century scientists of unquestioned technical competence—Lecomte du Noüy and Teilhard de Chardin—explicitly reject purely mechanistic interpretations of evolution. If you dismiss them as merely victims of a religious and mystical quirk in their otherwise first-rate scientific minds there are others more cautious who admit doubts or at least confessions of ignorance. Jean Rostand, one of the greatest living French biologists, dismisses Lecomte du Noüy almost contemptuously but he nevertheless says flatly: "In my opinion we know practically nothing about the factors that determine the progressive diversification of living creatures." And that is a long way from the cocksureness of many neo-Darwinians. Sir Julian Huxley, as cautious a scientist as one could find, is orthodox enough when he writes that "natural selection converts accidents into apparent design." On the other hand, he admits in evolution a "desirable trend" toward "the higher" (not merely the more complex) and although he warns that "we have no right to regard this trend as embodying a cosmic purpose or a Divine Intention" he goes on to say that "If we take the monistic or unitary naturalistic view demanded by evolutionary logic, matter and mind cease to appear as separate entities; they are seen as two necessary attributes or aspects of the single universal world stuff." And to me, at least, this seems to suggest that mind might be operable on a very low level. Loren Eiseley goes further: "If 'dead' matter has reared up this curious landscape of fiddling crickets, song sparrows, and wondering men, it must be plain even to the most devoted materialist that the matter of which he speaks contains amazing, if not dreadful powers, and may not impossibly be, as Hardy has suggested, 'but one mask of many worn by the Great Face behind.' "

In quoting from these eminent authorities I do not mean to suggest that they would necessarily be sympathetic to all, or perhaps to any, of the notions I have been trying to put into words. But they do, so it seems to me, suggest that not all competent scientists believe the last word has been said on the question.

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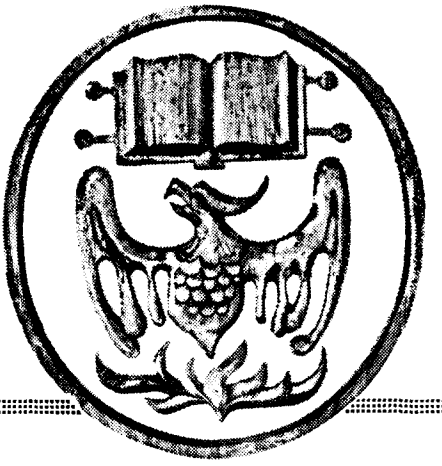

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A Look Around . . . . . .

Deadlier than the Male

PAUL A. ZAHL

My first visit to the Amazon was in the late 1930's when Belém, traditional gateway to the mightiest of all river basins, was still in the pit of depression. Paint was peeling disreputably from the walls of the Hotel Grande, and the plaza was threatened by jungle which no one seemed energetic enough to cut back. Yet the years when rubber was king, and this languorous capital of the State of Pará awake and flourishing, are part of the record.

Prodigious in its botanic profusion, the Amazon endemically nurtures a tree whose milky fluid pre-Columbians used for making balls that bounced—a remarkable substance that with the advent and growth of industrialism came to provide a universal cushion for a world on wheels. This latex was there for the mere tapping—no new trees needing to be planted, no demanding horticulture practiced, no labor unions surfeited. At the turn of the century the Amazon held a monopoly on the world market, and Manaus, field center of the industry a thousand miles upriver, raised on its shores along the Rio Negro an opera house as glittering and ornate as any in Milan or Paris.

How the Amazon rubber barons, basking in their come-easy wealth and imported culture, failed in 1876 to note Henry Wickham's shipment of *Hevea braziliensis* seeds to the Royal Botanical Gardens at Kew; how they dozed while the resulting seedlings were quietly being dispatched to Ceylon, then throughout the East for planting, is a matter of history. Only when these *Hevea* neophytes began to yield on a large scale and the resulting product to undersell the Brazilian equivalent, was Wickham's sleight of hand revealed. The Amazonian latex empire felt the shock wave of unexpected competition, and by 1915 its disintegration was complete.

In 1939, the ink on my university sheepskin barely dry, I ventured into this moldering world of rubber slump, seeking of all things ants. But it is not that visit, rather one eighteen years later, that now brings my pen to paper.

By then the picture had changed radically. The Hotel Grande was shipshape, the plaza well manicured, and conversation in the Grande's newly air-conditioned cocktail lounge ranged from manganese operations in Amapá, to a recently installed petroleum refinery at Manaus, and the wildly competitive search by a small army of foreign technologists for oil, bauxite, iron and titanium. The Amazon, economically flattened at the time of my first visit, was obviously in the throes of a profound resurgence —all of it, that is, save for one group of inhabitants whose ways were static. They had lured me once, were now doing so again.

In umbrageous jungles flung beyond the town's human zone, I found my friends quietly carrying on exactly as before, generally unnoticed and, if seen, sedulously avoided. I was of course delighted, for *Dinoponera gigantea* is of particular fascination not only because it is the world's largest ant but also because, as a member of the primitive Ponerinae, it represents an ancient protophase in the social evolution of all ants. Division of labor is unknown within this ancestral form. More sophisticated

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species, with their queens, workers, soldiers, slaves, fungus gardens, aphid "cows" and the like, bear about the same relation to *Dinoponera* as twentieth-century city dwellers do to Australian bushmen.

It is likely that these ponerines would have interested the Spanish conquistador Francisco Orellana, who in 1541 discovered the River and purveyed the myth of lady warriors regnant there. For *Dinoponera* society consists preponderantly of females and is dominated by them, all identical and marvelously versatile—interchangeably hunters, fighters and defenders, egg producers, nursemaids, police officers, excavators. The community is casteless, and has no recognizable queen. A few dolefully fragile males are permitted existence by largesse of the sisterhood, but solely for the well-known purpose.

Join me a few miles east of Belém where, machetes in hand and eyes alert for snakes, peccary and such, we enter a world pavilioned by a high layer of tree crowns stitched together with liana vines. Monkeys are up there, along with macaws, toucans and the rest of the equatorial zoo, but you neither see nor often hear them. The Neotropical rain forest is a deceptively peaceful place, and you wonder about all those Hollywood movies. That treetop sea tossing against the sky provides so diffusing a canopy that, except in clearings, little if any direct sunlight filters through, with the result that botanic life on the jungle floor, underlying a tangle of fallen trees and dead branches, and snowed upon ceaselessly by a sediment of leaves, tends to be meager and sallow. Humidity lingers near saturation; and the air, seldom moving, is never hot but always warm.

Picking a narrow trail, with our eyes ever groundward so as to approve each next step, we are suddenly aware of a shiny jet-black thing moving on the leaf-littered path just ahead—the largest ant we have ever seen. Its bulky wasp-waisted body measures well over an inch, with gangling legs and a pair of sweeping antennae effectively doubling that length. This is one of the authentic Amazons which, along with a similar but slightly smaller ponerine, is locally referred to as the *tocandira,* also the "fever" and the "four-sting" ant, the latter alias bearing the formidable connotation that to be stung by a quartet is fatal. We only half believe this, and therefore freeze but do not draw back.

Pinched between the monster's serrated mandibles is a bug of some sort, its legs still thrashing. Obviously the foray has been successful, and now with her prize secure the huntress is enroute back to colony headquarters. We follow.

I have said that ponerine ants are among the most primitive. Yet, compared to the majority of nonant insects, they are by no means inchoate, an inference based on the social scaling of insects by the degree of maternal care given eggs and offspring. Grasshoppers simply deposit their eggs in the ground and straightway forget them; a walking-stick female sits on a forest twig calmly venting ova for willy-nilly distribution anywhere below. These species patently have no postovulatory sensibility, and are assigned summarily to the social basement.

A little above them are such butterfly species as cement their eggs to the leaves of a specific plant whose tissues the hatchlings find tasty and nutritious. Recall the migrating monarch female who flies hundreds of miles to find fresh milkweed and having laid her eggs thereon loses all further interest in their future. Considerably more advanced is the mud dauber wasp who provides a paralyzed spider, the meat of which stays fresh until the egg has hatched and the larva is ready to dine; and the solitary bee who supplies each egg-containing brood cell with honey and pollen before sealing it shut. Some cockroaches, a bit higher in the Blue Book, tote their eggs postparturiently, so as to protect them until hatching is imminent. Among earwigs, the mother, having seen her eggs through hatching, extends her solicitude for a time into the lives of the resulting nymphs.

But all these species are still to be regarded as subsocial. Only among ants, termites and some wasps and bees is "true" social status achieved—that is, the mother and/or her helpers not only tend the eggs, feed the larvae and care for the cocoons, but remain with the offspring throughout life to

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set up a family system often so rigidly regulated as to make any yet conceived by fascist man seem comparatively benign. By what euthenic and chemical persuasion the queen creates castes among her children-subjects is something every would-be despot should look into.

But let us return to that black beauty on the jungle trail, hopeful she may lead us to her lair. She moves with urgent speed and, before we know it, veers off the path and vanishes into a jackstraw of rotting logs. We try to persuade an entrance to the log heap, but the job is beyond us. As the private eye's roper might report to his chief: "Contact made, subject elusive." But we are not discouraged; this, as of old, is still good hunting grounds for six-legged Amazons. Furthermore, the afternoon showers have begun and we must cut short the day's search. We hear their barrage on the forest canopy, but do not feel rain until we emerge from the forest to pick up our bicycles for the long pedal back to Belém. It seems foolish not to stay in the shelter of the forest, but we prefer a full soaking in the open to a half soaking in an ant-ridden jungle made suddenly dark by the sky's deep overcast.

A day or two later we are afield again, this time guided by José Lameira, a young aide from the *Instituto Agronomico do Norte,* a research and educational unit set up in Belém by the Brazilian Government to probe ways for increasing the productivity of what traditionally has been the Amazon Valley's skimpy agriculture. The prodigious character of the aim is matched only by the vastness of the area involved. Hundreds of thousands of those square miles of tropical luxuriance are underlain by soil of such high acidity as to render it hostile, even after successive clearing, to conventional farming. Crop varieties able to cope with acid soil must be found, or neutralizing fertilizers unstintingly used. The latter expedient has so far proved uneconomic; the former still keeps plant hybridizers searching. Meanwhile the River flows on and the jungle continues to burgeon.

José was no myrmecologist, but he was observant. He had told me that some distance from the Institute, in the vicinity of a decaying jungle chapel, big black ants were often to be seen. *Tocandiras?* We'd have a look.

A half hour on bicycles over increasingly rough and narrowing roadways delivered us to the edge of the jungle, then into a clearing where, just as José had described, stood a crumbling stone ruin, without roof or floor and overrun by the possessive tentacles of a gigantic climber. That these walls were of religious rather than secular origin was revealed by remnants of an elaborate altar and several niches still intact.

A quick first examination of the area revealed no sign of ants. José seemed unconcerned, reacting with a wordy Latin shrug. Then, as an occasional huge raindrop fell and the daylight grew dim, we listened to another of those inevitable showers crescendoing across the jungle. Abruptly, as though fifty firemen hidden somewhere above were turning their hoses our way, it broke—warm, splashing, massive. We pressed close to one of the chapel walls, huddling there under our raincoats. The meteoric character of such tropical rain bursts is always exciting to me but in this instance, as the shower passed, the effect was robbed by the sight of a familiar black beast striding across the soaked ground almost dead center of the nave.

The ant approached a fist-sized hole in the earth and, as I stared, vanished into it. Then another followed. As a third appeared, I came to life and with a leap brought my dripping hat down over the monster. José, with a squeak of vindication, raced back to the bikes for our collecting gear.

Cautiously I grasped the *Dinoponera* between the tips of an extra-long chrome forceps. Legs strained and flailed as her mandibles gnashed at the cold metal; and from the pointed end of her huge segmented abdomen a stinger nearly a quarter of an inch long jabbed repeatedly in a furious effort to penetrate any target within range. With each jab a droplet of transparent fluid oozed from the fine tip. José was back handing me a collecting bottle, and the prize was ours.

Traffic at the hole continued—arrivals

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carried small beetles, caterpillars or spiders, indicating the species' carnivorous habit; departing ants were empty-mouthed. My forceps plucked continually until our catch numbered perhaps fifty, at which time activity around the hole tapered off, and I assumed we had taken most of the colony's citizens.

Still alert for any incoming stragglers, we began to dig a yard-wide circular trench around the hole. Axe saw as much service as spade, for the earth here was interlaced by roots, some massive. We were hindered, too, by an occasional arriving huntress who, suddenly turned warrior, would drop her catch and rush at our shoes, obviously in angry search of vulnerable skin in which to deposit a deadly charge. She was, of course, summarily seized and bottled. Now and then an ant from below would partly emerge to investigate the commotion, only to pivot and disappear. Her responsibilities lay beneath.

Since the days of Solomon, men have described the ways of ants in anthropomorphic terms. While there are without question a number of provocative resemblances between the societies of ants and men, the differences prevail. An ant society is little more than an isolated reproductive unit, most often built around a queenly egg-layer and her specialized mainly female offspring; that of man, on the other hand, comprises a coherence for the common good of manifold family groups whose members are, except for sex, morphologically similar. Ants have employed the materfamilias pattern for well in excess of thirty million years during at least the latter portion of which their mores have changed little, suggesting that the social potential has been exploited just about as fully as the ant's neurophysiological endowment will permit. The genus *Homo,* possessing a central nervous system immeasurably more complex than that of even the most advanced social insect, has experimented with societism for only a few hundred thousand years, and is still, obviously, only in the nascency of its development. As for man's patent consciousness of self and his capacity for pure abstraction, we can no more securely deny that ants possess these in some degree than that ants are meaningfully aware of us.

Our trench was about a foot deep when I began hesitantly to remove earth near the center of the diggings where the hole had by now collapsed. Abruptly twenty or more furious females flared up from the soil interstices, wildly agitated by this disturbance and the disclosure of several dozen inch-long cocoons shaped like miniature Idaho potatoes. Each grabbing up a cocoon in her mandibles, the angry ladies managed to move the precious bundles a few inches, only to drop them and tackle others. Our forceps bit repeatedly, and in short order the panicked Amazons, along with their cocoons, were our unharmed prisoners. An additional deep spade thrust revealed a cache of off-white larvae—pinhead- to peanut-sized grubs, helpless and squirming.

Throughout the diggings there were no signs of elaborate mazes and galleries such as characterize the nests of most higher ants. The architecture here was simple, merely a tunnel and a couple of crude chambers, now with crumbling walls. In the debris I spotted dozens of whitish eggs stacked like cordwood, each no longer than a caraway seed and about as thick as a straight pin. The rapidly diminishing number of incensed females continued to seize eggs, larvae and cocoons, in a frenzy drop them, then repeat the action.

Appearing amid the chaos were now several reddish-brown, wasp-like males only half the size of their sister-mates, bearing transparent wings and on each of their foreheads a trio of conspicuous accessory eyes. I picked up one in my fingers, knowing that he possessed no weapons. The stinger and venom apparatus of ants are anatomical derivatives of an ancient obsolete egg depositor, and for this reason are found only in the female. Fragility, helplessness and submission, even in this state of civic alarm, marked the behavior of these winged consorts. Soon in the solicitous jaws of their distinctly better halves, they were being carried off to a fancied safety.

At last we had bottled virtually every individual of the colony—eggs, larvae, cocoons, adults, all alive. And that night in my

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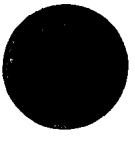

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temporary laboratory quarters at the Agronomical Institute, I kept vigil. By count, the she-ants numbered some ninety, evidence that a *Dinoponera* nest is moderately populated compared to the vast city-states of some Hymenopteran species. These I placed in two large screened cages provided with bottom layers of soft damp jungle soil. For a time the prisoners merely paced their cells or climbed aimlessly up and down the sides. But when I poured larvae and cocoons into one of the cages, activity there quickened. Ants seized immatures in their jaws, exhibiting the same rescue response observed earlier at the excavation site. From time to time, some of the females would release their burdens and patiently stand guard over them. Others nibbled at the soft skins of the larvae, conceivably as a cleansing action, but more probably to lick up edible exudates.

Lids sat tightly on all my bottles and cages, but during a transfer at least one specimen must have made her escape, for suddenly crawling from the floor and up onto one of my bare sandaled feet was a lady bent on retribution. My swat came too late, as I felt her mandibles take hold, then the sharp entry of a viciously plunging hypodermic.

Initially the pain was not intense, and I continued my observations. Later as my ankle began to throb, I examined the puncture and the ugly wheal developing around it, comforting myself with the reminder that these, after all, were *four*-sting ants.

The chemistry of ponerine venom is obscure. I really had no way of knowing what to expect, although I visualized the toxic deposit seeping into my tissues, upsetting capillary permeability, blocking nerve synapses, disrupting the local neuromotor system. I did know, however, from an evolutionary viewpoint, that ponerine ants were derived from a wasp-like ancestor, and that therefore their venom probably bears some resemblance to that of contemporary wasps, which is far more virulent than most Hymenopteran venoms, and the cause of recorded fatalities, especially among victims somehow allergic to it. The active components of wasp venom are known to be histamine, 5-hydroxytryptamine, acetylcholine, along with various proteins and enzymes, for which likely counteractants are antihistamine and intravenous calcium lactate. Neither of these was available.

I was hobbling now, as the pain rose through my calf and thigh, extending into the groin where lymph nodes were beginning to pulsate. The agony lasted about an hour and then rather rapidly abated. Soon all that was left was a glowering welt the size of a half-dollar on my ankle, and a finer regard on my part for Amazon weaponry.

It was now close to three in the morning. In the cage to which I had added no larvae or cocoons, a number of ants had arranged themselves in a tight circle, like kittens around a bowl of milk. They were motionless except for slight adjustments of their heads and mouthparts, their attention riveted on a central packet of some twenty glistening little eggs. Clearly these were freshly laid, and the sisters, one of whom had done the deed, had gathered no doubt to serve as nursemaids.

Next day I returned to the excavation at the chapel ruins. Three single females crawled on the rubble heap. No doubt far afield at the time of the demolition, they had returned from foraging to find devastation where once had been home. I did not molest them, and when I left they were still stalking as though unable to grasp the reality of their plight. But on the following day when I came back for a final look, no despairing pacers were there. Instead a fresh hole pierced the earth. The survivors were obviously below, hollowing a new chamber, perhaps preparing for the same sort of egg-laying party as had been so promptly organized by their captive sisters. Recovery in the wake of calamity represents perhaps the greatest value of nonspecialization, for had these primitives been one-job members of a rigidly interdependent social structure, like the citizens of most higher ant societies, their doom would have been sealed. I draw no parallels regarding the human species.

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An Unprofessional Eye . . . . . .

Oyiemu-o?

BENJAMIN DEMOTT

All at once, seemingly, to homeland hisses and Anglo-Saxon applause, the "native novelists" of the world were telling tales in English: was it safe to trust their words?

A no-answer to the question was a fool's answer, according to bookish opinion. And viewed in the light of literary history, the opinion was thoroughly understandable. No doubt the *Times Literary Supplement* sounded a bit blimpish in dismissing West African and Indian complaints that the novelists of these areas are "misrepresenting the native experience." (The paper attacked the complainants for failing to grasp that novels are "partial and cannot avoid giving offense.") And no doubt sensible readers would bear in mind the temptation to exotica facing writers of little-known lands who produce books mainly for export. But among literary folk neither concession amounted to much. What counted was that, time and again in the past, novelists abused in mid-career as exoticizers or falsifiers have ended by establishing themselves as seers. And, for minds trained to respect the past, the act of shrugging off these instances (approving the complaints against "native writers" appeared to require nothing less) constituted a near breach of professional codes.

That the reluctance to commit such a breach was understandable, though, did not in itself prove it was wise. Imaginative writers found wanting at home because they dare to represent their countrymen unfavorably are easy to defend: simply invoke the title Satirist and recall previous episodes of outrage among the satirized. But the situation is otherwise when writers are found wanting, say, for their sympathy with tragic views of history. And, as it happens, the misgivings stirred by the native novelists of the present are in fact traceable in some measure to their tragic rather than to their satiric themes. The item that molds these themes, moreover—a theory of history linking the fall of man with the advent of civilization, and rehabilitating the metaphor of the noble savage—is one that civilized people themselves do not always treat with favor. The case is, to speak flatly, that reservations about the fictional voice of the new nations are not mere signs of local exacerbation at comic pictures of The Black. They are, instead, part of a developing argument about the nature and meaning of the civilization into which those nations—people by the hundreds of millions—are now entering. And implicit in them is a critical problem, that of the relation between art and social aspiration, which no amount of muttering about oversensitive or naïve audiences can possibly wish away.

As should be said, the summary of the new novelists' themes as "tragic" needs to be qualified. The African folk tales of Amos Tutuola ask to be thought of as a long lament for a fabulous past—but the fabulous hero and heroine of *The Palm Wine Drinkard* and *The Brave African Huntress* can't be called doleful types. The novelists of Trinidad who tell of their countrymen's London experience of civilization focus on *anomie* as a condition of whites and blacks alike ("Under the kiff-kiff laughter," says the narrator of Samuel Selvon's *The Lonely Londoners,* "a great aimlessness, a great restless, swaying movement

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. . . a kind of misery and pathos and a frightening—what?")—but their books are often very funny indeed. R. K. Narayan permits Indian characters to dwell on the directionlessness of "high" civilization ("The whole of the West is in a muddle owing to its political consciousness," says Gajapathy in *The English Teacher,* "and what a pity that the East should follow suit")—but Narayan is one of the few writers alive who have advanced to the other side of tragedy, and none of his books serves a simple argument. It is the work of younger writers, significantly, that justifies a description of the native novelist as a man enraptured by the past and distressed by the present. And for some of the books in question reactionary seems, initially at least, a perfectly sensible label.

Consider, for example, the work of Chinua Achebe, the thirty-year-old Nigerian author of *Things Fall Apart* (1959) and *No Longer at Ease* (1961). Stories of fathers and sons, Achebe's novels are attempts to render the inward experience of Nigerian generations that have simultaneously inhabited two worlds. Okonkwo *père,* the hero of *Things Fall Apart,* is an ambitious and masterful member of a primitive culture rich in feasts, battles, oracles, scapegoats, bad weather and black passions—but from the start (the late nineteenth century) he is conscious of the coming of white emissaries of new religion and unassailable power, and in the end this power destroys him. Okonkwo *fils,* the hero of *No Longer at Ease,* is an ambitious member of a contemporary, graft-ridden, Lagos bureaucracy rich in cokes and cocktails, nylons and whitewalls—but from the start he is engaged in an effort to cope with tribal as well as with bureaucratic idols, and in the end this effort destroys him. The likeness of the fates is suggestive, but the novelist is concerned less with continuities than with discontinuities. He portrays the old world as relatively unselfconscious and the new as sick with self. His tribal generation is in constant encounter with two kinds of energy, clarity and rigor—that of the poised commanding colonial and that of the vibrant, iron-browed chieftain; while his bureaucratic generation, exposed to whining tribesmen and embarrassed colonial lame ducks who are "fascinated" with the black man's looks and manners, knows only fatuity and confusion. And these differences determine the shape of his tales. The younger Okonkwo in *No Longer at Ease* is an introspective university graduate who hopes to elevate ethical standards among public servants; in telling of the ruin of his hopes, and of his decline into graft, the novelist seems bent upon showing him forth as a victim of a general cultural situation, rather than as a figure of personal weakness. At one stage in the descent young Okonkwo hears a group of traders singing a familiar song:

> An in-law went to see his in-law
> Oyiemu-o
> His in-law seized him and killed him
> Oyiemu-o
> Bring a canoe, bring a paddle
> Oyiemu-o
> The paddle speaks English
> Oyiemu-o

Laboring hard to translate the refrain into English, he comprehends at length that it is a comment on two great "betrayals"—the murder of an in-law ("a man's in-law was his *chi,* his personal god"), and the snapping of the bond of language that united the tribe: the "burden of the song was 'the world turned upside down.'" Insofar as it crystallizes incertitude, ambivalence and probing doubt, the translated tag stands as a key passage for both of Achebe's novels.

The books described possess more than sociological interest. They are strong in observation, and there is authority in an account of a young bureaucrat's guilt at accepting tribal scholarships for legal studies (his tribe considered itself to be in need of trustworthy legal service), and thereafter dropping those studies to read English literature. (Achebe began his higher education meaning to become a doctor; after winning scholarships at a government secondary school and later at the medical school of the University College, Ibadan, he shifted

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to the liberal arts.) The author is likably proud of his literariness: he finds his titles in Yeats and Eliot, is preoccupied with centers that don't hold, doesn't scold his hero for taking pleasure in overheard remarks reminiscent of some accent of "Gerontion" or "Prufrock," and is in many respects the best-disciplined writer-in-English that his country has produced. (Aside from Tutuola the other Nigerian novelists of note are Cyprian Ekwensi, T. M. Aluko and Onuora Nzekwu.) But as yet his talent deserves regard as a symptom rather than as an independent force. Its responsiveness to the modern literary voices of reaction, and its disposition to set up contrasts between the organic coherence of the remote past and the discontinuities of the present, bespeak attitudes toward the "revolution of rising expectations" that are considerably less exuberant than the phrase itself. And the appearance of similar attitudes in novelists even younger than Achebe (the youngest is Nzekwu, whose *Wand of Noble Wood,* a first novel, was published in London in 1961) suggests that they are likely to be dominant for some time.

Assessing the adequacy or appropriateness of these attitudes is no comfortable task. Current literary sophistication, as everyone knows, is hostile to the practice of testing fictional visions against Objective Reports. And it would seem in any event that, given the language barrier, such a practice would be impossible even if sophistication were persuaded to sanction it. The celebrated language barrier, however, is not everywhere as imposing as it was in former days. A number of nations, determined to unify territories divided by tribal dialects, are themselves encouraging the use of English. (Some have welcomed foreign pedagogical assistance: United States government enterprises at English-teaching abroad range from Peace Corps projects to fellowship programs of AID.) And a good many subliterary "organs of communication" have already adopted the new tongue. Reporters and editors from Frutal to Surabaja, Kumasi to Bengazi, journals of parrot isles and golden valleys, the *Zanzibar Voice* and the *Kingston Gleaner,* the *Basutoland News* and the *Penang Echo,* the *Billboard* of Belize and the *Post* of Bangkok, the *Pioneer* of Ashanti and the *Port-au-Prince Sun*—all are now telling time in English. As guides to the quality of experience in the lands they serve, such publications have clear limitations—which is simply to say again that they are far from offering fixed standards for the "evaluation" of imaginative writers. But they do offer the monolingual shut-in further glimpses of two characters—the lame-duck colonial and the awakened native—who often occupy the center of the novelist's canvas. And, interestingly, this supplementary evidence works to validate the imaginary portraits.

To say this isn't to claim about the voice of the colonial, for instance, that nowhere in the world does it speak with the air of imperturbable rectitude familiar to Okonkwo *père* and others of the vanishing generation in Africa and elsewhere. An occasional newspaper account of a confrontation of magistrate and prisoner tells between its lines of the survival of the assumption that the distance between white and black is akin to that between man and beast—witness the following recent report of a trial:

> Thuhloana Sephelka, elder of the Round Dance Church of Mottokoa's Village, appeared at the Teyateyaneng Magistrate's Court before Mr. R. S. Balfe on a charge of culpable homicide.
>
> Ma-Saetsang Sephelka, the wife of the accused, in her evidence said that on the 7th January of [1962] she went to see the headman's wife after sunset. On her return her husband hit her. He then took a stick intending to hit her on the head. She turned her head and the three month old baby received the blow on the head.
>
> The following morning she noticed that the baby's head was swollen and took it to the medical officer. The baby died a few minutes after it had been examined. A post mortem examination revealed that death was due to a fractured skull and brain haemorrhage.
>
> Summing up, Mr. Balfe reproached the habit

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of the Basuto of striking their assailants on the heads with sticks. [Sephelka] was found guilty and sentenced to 18 months imprisonment with hard labor.

But the unastonished correspondent and magistrate—men whose impersonal assurance provided older generations with a clarifying object of hatred—appear regularly only in the southern African press (the item quoted is from the *Basutoland News*). Throughout most of the underdeveloped world the reported character of the colonial lame duck is marked by fussiness and absurdity rather than detachment and will. From a Rhodesian news service comes word that the country's National Resources Board, headed by a Mr. P. Deedes, "is launching an appeal to cover the cost of reintroducing White Rhinoceros to Southern Rhodesia." The *Daily Gleaner* of Kingston fills its letters columns in midsummer with complaints against a radio interviewer who, reporting a royal visit, "kept referring to Her Royal Highness, Princess Margaret, as 'she' . . . ." The *Central African Post* teases itself with hopes of a British defection from the U.N. (Reporting a London dinner meeting of the Nyasaland Club, the paper takes pugnacious satisfaction in a disingenuous remark of R. A. Butler to the effect that he "wonder[ed] what Rhodes would have thought of the United Nations.") Even the sentimentality of the Tory Romantic as tourist is losing its purity. An Englishman writing on the primitive fishermen of the Costa da Caparica begins with a paean to men who sweat for their bread (" 'When Adam delved/ And Eve span' they did so at 'subsistence level' and probably the fisheries of the Sea of Galilee provided for daily wants and little more"), but after a moment he slips out of romance into cold-war pragmatics:

> Entirely out of date, uneconomic, what you will, but these shipbuilders and those tartan-clad, stocking-capped fishermen . . . represent a valuable reserve of ancient craftsmanship. In these days of progress when civilization may be wiped out from one day to another by ultra-modern nuclear engines of destruction, these old boys may still be very useful. It is well to keep candles in the house against a power breakdown. *(Anglo-Portuguese News)*

And the pervasive note on the Dark Continent—sometimes amusing, sometimes tearful—is that of farewell and dissolution. "Owing to termination of partnership," says the classified advertisement in the Bulawayo *Chronicle,* "tenders are invited for the purchase of a gold mine." "Mr. Smart of the Nairobi [Kenya] City Council," reports the Central Africa News Service, "sadly appeals to quitting settlers to send any . . . material which could be useful for compiling a history of Nairobi's early years to the Nairobi Mayor's Parlour." Things fall apart.

As for the experience of the new educated classes and bureaucrats: here again the nonliterary evidence argues strongly for the reasonableness of the fictional view. According to that view, as found both in Indian and Nigerian novels, educated youth in the underdeveloped nations knows two kinds of torment—the insistent Western hard sell which equates virtue with buying power and stimulates impossible desires, and the insistent inward fear that new corruption, old superstition and expanding mass media are preparing a path for charismatic (or fascist) leaders. The hard-selling ad, a staple of the newspaper-in-English abroad, sings of a thousand "needs"—from Ovaltine to Morris Minors, roundworm expellers to fountain pens. But regardless of the nature of the object hawked, the act of purchase is defined invariably as a step toward self-realization. (A typical, widely placed ad carries the headline HIGH STANDARDS above a photograph of two Negroes, one impressionable and eager-eyed, the other white-coated, supervisory; the text reads as follows:

> The skilled young worker takes careful note of the manager's instruction. Soon he will be promoted because the manager has noted the high standard of his work. The manager has also noted with approval the young man's Parker Pen. For Parker Pens are made to the highest standard in the world. That is why the manager himself chose a Parker, as you can see by the famous . . . clip in his pocket. If you

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The second torment, anguish about the entanglements of corruption and charisma, is obviously genuine in present-day Nigeria. According to the London *Observer,* the government of that federation has for months been conducting an investigation of the public corporations of the Western Region (the latter control millions of pounds), with the aim of finding sufficient evidence of corruption to launch a movement against the area's elected chief. (The probe has given rise thus far not only to charges and countercharges, but to insurrectionary plotting and repressive police action.) What is more, among the new states there are several—Ghana for one—where the language of the press itself testifies to the justice of concern about manipulated superstition. Ghanian newspapers are all miracle and melodrama—and the Threatening Enemy is, naturally, the robber bureaucrat-politico. Nkrumah the Good survives the "wicked bomb attacks" of "grafters" and "scoundrels" because the Lord respects him, and it is as the interpreter of this special relation that the press plays its political role. News columns tell in plain style of "escape celebrations" held in honor of Osagyefo the President—mass dancing of the "Ewe dance" to the music of "borborbar." Faithfully they detail the presentation of gifts to the Leader (a cow, a dozen pigeons, some kola), and the performance of high rituals (the speaker of the National Assembly drapes Osagyefo in white cloth to signify his victory over his enemies, others anoint him with the blood of a white sheep offered for sacrifice and Madam Josephine Ehaonond-Blay pours lavender over his feet). But the editorial pages, more venturesome, announce that BOMB SPOT SHALL BE A SACRED SHRINE, and explain that:

> . . . in just over five minutes after the explosion a torrential rainfall [came] answering the fury of violent storms and lightning. On this same day of the bomb atrocity . . . there was an eclipse of the sun in Ghana . . . . Long live the Leader, Master, Teacher, Founder, Father, Inspirer, the Torch, the Pilot, the Guide, the Fountain of Honour, Our Osagyefo the Messiah . . . .

And on the women's page of the same paper (the *Ghana Times),* below a headline reading NO SOFT DEAL WITH THE EVIL TRIO, and adjacent to comic strips (Flash Gordon, the Lone Ranger) and astrologists, a forthright women's columnist named Nancy Chochoe Plange fills her space as follows:

> Just imagine the situation our country would have been ditched in if these "despicable rats" (with apologies to traitor Adamafio) had succeeded in their evil intentions. Oh God, thou art good and wonderful . . . . The nation will never accept a soft deal with these rogues. We also believe that they were not alone in their evil machinations; let's comb the nation well and bring their accomplices to book, those silly selfish ne-er-do-wells who want to lie in soft-padded beds while honey drips into their hellish mouths. Damn them! To hell with them!

Darting erratically from century to century, Miss Chochoe Plange's diction ("thou art" as against "soft deal," "evil machinations" as against "to hell with them") provides a tonal microcosm of temporal discontinuity —and thus, in addition, an analogue of a sort for the wild cab drivers of Lagos whose custom (says Mr. Achebe) is to seek out dogs to run over in order to "bring good luck for car." But the prime interest of her column is as a reminder that in the new nations fear of the perversion of literacy isn't idle.

To repeat: accepting a basket of clippings as a satisfactory substitute for methodologically sound research is risky: the case for "reaction" cannot be tried in the newspapers. But there are other relevant and less disreputable repositories of evidence. Professionally skilled inquirers into the transformation of the underdeveloped world often draw attention to chaos and cruelty as concomitants of the change. A few years ago, discussing the experience of

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urban workers in the new nations, Eugene Black remarked (in his *Diplomacy of Economic Development)* that these people are "plunged into a bewildering, formless, insecure life, requiring a whole new set of attitudes. . . ." The tale of the Chinese "forward leap," even when set forth by as unhysterical an observer as Edgar Snow, remains one of appalling human sacrifice. The most powerful sections of Robert Heilbroner's new book on the underdeveloped world, *The Great Ascent,* are concerned to demonstrate that the dynamics of the "development revolution" are those of human dislocation. ("The great social transformation of development," writes this respected economist, "is apt to be marked not by rising expectations but by a loss of traditional expectations, not by enjoyable gains but by a new awareness of deprivation.") And books have already been written on the precise nature of the psychological strains of transformation (the most interesting of them is Everett Hagen's treatise *On the Theory of Social Change).*

What can be said, in sum, is that neither the untendentious reports of outsiders nor the highly tendentious pages of the "local" press provide much justification for a dismissal of the novelistic version of experience in the underdeveloped nations. If the clarities of the lost world now being rediscovered and reevaluated were harsh, they were nonetheless clarities. If the emergent "mixed attitudes" toward the revolution are surprising at first glance, they become less so on scrutiny. And if these attitudes are rejected abruptly as products of self-indulgent fantasy or nostalgic exoticism, the rejection must be made in the name not of fact but of faith.

From all this it doesn't follow, of course, that the faith in question is narrow or mean. The freshly admired world of coherence and value is also, as the novelists' critics are aware, the world in which an Iranian peasant goes blind because he cannot find $3.94 that he believes he must have in order to be treated, in which bludgeoned infants bleed to death untended and in which a billion human beings "enjoy a standard of living less than $100 a year." (The statistic is provided in Mr. Heilbroner's volume, which includes a moving report on what families can and cannot do, round the world, on less than a hundred dollars a year.) And there is meaning in disease and hunger and violence as well as in "values." To be sure, the imagination doesn't suffer by the numbers. And because of the universal tide of irony it is difficult to imagine any writer offering a joyful vision of young minds awakening into the world of created beauty—the world not simply of books but of individual aspiration. And the elementary political fact remains that the "great ascent" to a decent standard of living probably cannot be managed under democratic forms. But still the snag catches. Extraordinary possibilities have been glimpsed; an end to a thousand torments has been envisaged; is it inconceivable that a thoughtful and generous mind might, in the contemplation of a prospect once literally unimaginable, find itself compelled to exuberance, boomed (as it were) into buoyancy? Is not this literary finickiness about Progress one more proof of the justice of the famous promulgation about the two cultures—the gospel that ticked off the humanist as inhumane?

The traditional answer to such questions, namely that the voice of the imaginative writer was the original voice of freedom, lacks force. The day of English sonnets on the cause of freedom in Haiti is past: there has been no literary language for the expression of generalized aspiration, social or political, for longer than a century.* And criticism currently doubts that such a language can ever exist again—as this comment of Auden makes clear:

* The new novelist of an underdeveloped nation who attempts to find such a language strikes most experienced readers as crude. Cyprian Ekwensi of Nigeria describes his first book, *People of the City* (1954), as an attempt to dramatize his hero's "genuine determination to be part of the rapidly growing political, social, and cultural development of his country." An English critic, Martin Banham, writing in a recent issue of the *Review of English Literature,* speaks of Ekwensi as "a good journalist but non-creative. . . ."

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The relation of a poet, or any artist, to society and politics is, except in Africa or still backward semifeudal countries [the exception need not be made any longer], more difficult than it has ever been because, while he cannot but approve of the importance of everybody getting enough food to eat and enough leisure, this problem has nothing whatever to do with art, which is concerned with *singular persons,* as they are alone and as they are in their personal relations. Since these interests are not the predominant ones in his society; indeed in so far as it thinks about them at all, it is with suspicion and latent hostility — it secretly or openly thinks that the claim that one is a singular person, or a demand for privacy, is putting on airs, a claim to be superior to other folk — every artist feels himself at odds with modern civilization.

Neither is it helpful to answer meechingly that, since the literary voice is at present only one among dozens of competing voices, its crotchetiness, irrelevance or inadequacy "does no harm": the step from here to a total discount of imaginative literature is too short.

The one reasonable retort is that the reactionary gestures of the new literatures-in-English are at bottom gestures of consciousness—and therefore must be understood as notification first of all of an ascent achieved, not of an ascent despised. The point is complicated; it doesn't appear on maps that show the world as an assemblage of opposites—leftists versus rightists, sickness versus health and the like; its weight can be felt only if the truism that civilization equals consciousness is held firmly in mind. But it does have weight. The principle of growth in a society is the principle of innovation, and, as Everett Hagen remarks in his analysis of social change, "any acceptance of a cultural trait from outside is innovation; there is no such thing as passive imitation." In planning their economic development on foreign models, the new nations open themselves to technical sophistication. In imitating foreign models of social criticism, in defining the threat of dislocation implicit in the "development revolution," the new novelists open their world to sophistication about culture itself. Their voices announce the advent of minds that occupy a world of choices, that have had intuitions of multiplicity, that grasp the limitations of wholism and understand the usefulness of attempts to body forth the reality of parts.

The telescoping of historical process involved in these attempts is, admittedly, jarring. That nations struggling for release from "natural simplicity"—in the form of the wild drum and bludgeon—should produce pastoralists; that writers whose countrymen turn eyes of longing toward the West should respond by invoking English poets on the sickness of the West; that men of sensibility can blot from sight clinics, nurses, schools, scholarships, the whole apparatus of Progress, and listen instead with inward ear to the song of *oyiemu-o,* the world turned upside down—all this is extraordinary. The likelier event would have been for writers to turn themselves into servants of the dogmas of production. But in the West the artist is the critic of dogmas —those of depression as well as of euphoria. And the decision of the novelists of the emerging countries to follow the Western model, instead of the model of the artist as party hack, may in the end be no occasion for international tears.

For if any report can be trusted, critics of dogmas are needed in these nations. To speak against the public definition of the good when that definition is universally deprecated by everyone capable of thought is, true enough, to be a cliché-monger (the Western literary world is overpopulated with the latter). But to speak as a critic of the public definition of the good when that definition stands unquestioned, when aspiration and overexpectation seem universal, when in the Lagos streets bicycling youngsters wear placards on their backs announcing all confidently FUTURE MINISTER—this is at once to meet a public need and to function as a civilized man.

No doubt there are dangers in satisfying such needs—more of them than are apparent to oblivious literary minds that see every issue in terms of the old wars of artists and philistines. The young novelist of Nigeria enthralled with Eliot's lines about the magi—

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But no longer at ease here, in the old dispensation
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THE SONGS OF HOMER. *By G. S. Kirk. Cambridge University Press. $7.50.*

Reviewed by DUDLEY FITTS

One of the more engaging aspects of this handsome book is the ease with which it moves through a difficult and murky terrain. Mr. Kirk has undertaken an extended reassessment of the Homeric problem: the possible origins of the Epic, particularly in the light of recent Mycenaean and other archaeological evidence; the always fascinating, but less important, question of authorship; and the vicissitudes of the text in transmission. The book is primarily for the general reader, however, and not for the specialist, although the specialist is clearly challenged at every one of the argumentative points; and this involves the reduction and restatement of a vast body of information—commonplaces for scholars, but not for the amateur—before speculation can begin. Speaking as one of the amateurs, I have nothing but admiration for the clarity of Mr. Kirk's exposition and the tact with which he avoids the chatter of popularization on the one hand and the jargon of technical scholarship on the other. He is that rarest of birds in contemporary classical studies: a good teacher.

On the question of authorship, which inevitably appeals most to nonspecialists, Mr. Kirk is a moderate; I suppose one might call him a Reformed Unitarian. He believes that the oral composition of the monumental *Iliad*—that is to say, the gathering in, the amplification and transformation of Trojan songs current during the so-called Dark Age following the Dorian invasion—was the work, probably in the eighth century, of a single intelligence that may as well be called *Homeros* as anything else, and that this was the paradigm for the *Odyssey*, considerably later in the century. Some such conclusion would seem instinctively right, even without the evidence that Mr. Kirk adduces. Who or what Homer may have been matters even less than who or what Shakspere was. Nevertheless, a commonsense reading of the *Iliad* as we have it leaves a man with the stubborn impression of a single poet in (admittedly) somewhat disorganized control—not a committee of editors, still less a haphazard recension of rhapsodes. The same kind of uninformed reading persuades one that the *Odyssey*, in its monumental shape, was likewise the work of a single poet, and not the poet of the *Iliad*. Instinct and common sense are not scholarship, although it is amusing to see how often they will coincide even with its hoarier aspects—Aristarchus, for example, said that the true *Odyssey* ended with the two hundred and ninety-sixth line of Book Twenty-three; and it is comforting, although not essential, to have scholarship confirm the statement on linguistic and structural evidence. It is the

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DUDLEY FITTS is instructor in English at Phillips Academy and visiting lecturer in comparative literature at Harvard University. His most recent book is *Aristophanes: Four Comedies.*

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great merit of Mr. Kirk's approach that he never loses sight of these instinctual considerations: he is a critic as well as a technician throughout his investigation of what he succinctly describes as "a complex development *of some kind* from earlier and shorter versions [of the *Iliad*] to the monumental epic as it was eventually recorded in writing."

It is impossible to say how much our understanding of the problems of the Homeric songs will be affected by recent archaeological discoveries, of which Ventris's decipherment of Linear B is only the most spectacular. There is not much yet that is stable, at any rate: how tenuous these matters are is evidenced by Mr. Kirk's remark that "It is conceivable, then, that the epithet 'silver-studded' became attached to swords as early as the great age of the Mycenaean world, surviving in this metrical phrase [he has been discussing ξίφος ἀργυρόηλον] through the declining centuries of the Bronze Age and then through the Dark Age into the Homeric poems. Now the assured presence of even one single Mycenaean poetical phrase in Homer is sufficient to prove that there was Mycenaean poetry, probably of dactylic type and quite probably narrative in kind. It may well be that 'silver-studded sword' will eventually be judged to provide this proof." The argument is impeccable, although the weight of "It is conceivable" and "It may well be" and "probably" dampens any impulse to rush out into the street to celebrate. But what excitement there is, what possibilities of enlargement, in even this cautious observation!

And it is really the excitement of the whole book that matters most. *The Songs of Homer* is scholarship, but it is scholarship humanely and elegantly worn; reduced, obviously, for the general reader, but never cheapened by sensationalism or condescension; brilliantly alive even in the lengthy technical passages that had every traditional excuse for going dead. It is something of an accomplishment to combine archaeological exposition, linguistics, literary criticism and aesthetics in an extended, vivid, speculative argumentation. It is superb teaching.

The Growth of Liberty

FREEDOM IN THE WESTERN WORLD. *By Herbert J. Muller. Harper and Row. $8.50.*

Reviewed by AUGUST HECKSCHER

Herbert Muller in the midst of this volume quotes Montaigne: "I have nothing to say entirely, simply . . . without confusion, disorder, blending, mingling, nor in one word." The sentence might be applied to himself and his own treatment of history. Mr. Muller is not disorderly, and not obscure; but history he sees unfolding in unexpected ways, its morals being pointed ambiguously. The present study, a continuation of his earlier *Freedom in the Ancient World* traces the growth of human liberty from the dark ages to the rise of modern democracy in the French Revolution. It is a constantly provocative account, covering territory that is often familiar, but nearly always providing new insights and evaluations.

What is freedom in Mr. Muller's conception? It embraces the whole tendency toward the growth of personality, the enhancement of individual power, as well as the psychological and material factors that have made of modern man so rich, complex and autonomous a character. The definition is broad; and as the author himself says, it brings his history to something close to what used to be called a history of "civilization." Battles and dynasties he can skip over lightly. But almost everything else comes under his speculating eye. The development of political and scientific ideas, no less than the growth of technology, the advancement of learning and the changing organization of society become part of the wide drama of which modern man is the hero.

The Uses of the Past was the first of Mr. Muller's books with which many of us became familiar. The elegance of style, the

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detached and skeptical approach to historical events, the capacity to develop through history certain themes relevant to ourselves and our own day—all these made the book striking and unforgettable. Mr. Muller has ranged farther and more deeply in the present study. He has made his point of view a firm ground from which the Western world and all its doings may be surveyed. He has perfected the technique of emphasizing what is odd and unanticipated without pressing paradox so far that it falsifies the thing being described.

Under his gaze nothing ever succeeds wholly; and the failures of history frequently bring results beneficial to the civilized man. Florence was one of the magnificent successes in the story of Western civilization; second only to Athens it was the scene of superb achievements of the human mind and spirit. Yet Florence, Mr. Muller tells us, was a "failure"; the whole Italian Renaissance was a failure, running out into pride and materialism. As for the Reformation, it was in surprising ways a success. But "one cannot begin to understand the Reformation," he adds, "unless one realizes that it became radically different from what its founders intended." The levellers, says Mr. Muller—to take one more example of his style and outlook—"were representing another lost cause, which was to be the great cause of the future."

The historic judgment must always deal with "mixed fruits"; the causes of things are generally "indirect, unforeseen, unintended," and the issues, as Mr. Muller can state unapologetically, "I have insistently complicated."

For two reasons this approach seems peculiarly suited to a history of freedom. In the first place, freedom does arise in strange ways, often in the interstices of great and more famous events, sometimes as the beneficial residue of actions shaped by quite other motives. If we were to write the history of freedom in terms of men's conscious striving for it, or solely in terms of the laws and institutions by which it has been advanced, the story would be brief and naïve. The age of discovery was born of a mixture of desires; the growth of science has meant in part the liberation of men and in part their subjection to new forms of necessity. And so it goes. A quizzical, inquiring, constantly appraising spirit is the means by which true progress in liberty is separated from the outward shows and the grandiose schemes.

But there is another and more subtle reason why Mr. Muller is an ideal historian of freedom. He intends history to teach; the past, in his view, very definitely does have its uses. And the lesson it can best teach is the value of detachment. So it is that the very process of reviewing and criticizing the past puts us in a frame of mind where we can ourselves become free—free in the sense which gives the word its deepest meaning. The particular value of Montaigne, Mr. Muller says, was "not only his mature awareness of limits, flux and uncertainty, and his freedom from self-deception—it was his demonstration that on these hard terms it was still possible to maintain human dignity and the value of self-hood"; that in doubt and suspense it was possible for a man "to live cheerfully." Mr. Muller evidently intends that the contemplation of the past shall put us in a temper somewhat comparable to Montaigne's.

The reader finds himself, indeed, constantly questioning the events of his own age and the quality of his contemporaries. How will the growth of modern science be finally held to have contributed to freedom? How will the universal advance of democracy and equality? An age in which nearly all the constraints of past periods have been removed—constraints imposed by poverty, superstition, ignorance and (in large parts of the globe) by tyrannical rulers—remains vulnerable, in Mr. Muller's phrase, to "ironic contemplation." The freedom we can ultimately claim our own will undoubtedly be less complete and dazzling than the combination of democracy and science would suggest.

Yet there will be freedom: about this Mr. Muller is reasonably hopeful. Western civilization has been "the most boldly, richly, continuously creative . . . in all his-

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tory." In spite of all—and perhaps because of much that now seems to menace and cramp the spirit of liberty—western man will advance in wealth, power and culture. He will advance not because he constructs logical plans and pursues them single-mindedly, but because those who have known freedom really do become attached to it, and do not willingly surrender it.

Play of Intellect

THE DYER'S HAND AND OTHER ESSAYS. *By W. H. Auden. Random House. $7.50.*

Reviewed by LOUIS SIMPSON

Of the bright qualities that made the poetry of W. H. Auden striking some thirty years ago, it was the variety of information he brought into verse that seemed most original. From Freud to locomotives for this practitioner was an easy leap. Whereas his predecessors—with the notable exception of Eliot—wrote about dickeybirds, Auden made poetry out of coal and the hitherto indigestible doctrines of Marx. Amazed by his confidence, a generation followed in his steps; minor poets strained themselves trying to go over the same hurdles. It is the same unflagging precocity that strikes us when we read his essays. Curiosity about many things—history, myths, cooking, poems—makes *The Dyer's Hand,* unlike the prose of other poets who seem to know about nothing but poetry, a highly entertaining book.

Of course there have been changes in his mind; Marx has been censored by the author here, as in his revisions of his poems; the basis is now religious: "Roman Catholic in an easygoing Mediterranean sort of way. Lots of local saints." The political background that was so appropriate in the thirties—with the public-school charade of foreign spies, awful headmasters and impudent English boys—has been replaced by a personal geography: "Limestone uplands like the Pennines plus a small region of igneous rocks with at least one extinct volcano. A precipitous and indented seacoast."

Whereas in their later years some poets are harder to please, Auden's mind is sybaritic. Nowadays he speaks of people who like a steak well-done with the disapproval the younger Auden showed for arms manufacturers. His intelligence and playfulness are on the increase. His mind was always superbly logical, and to such a mind age, with the information it brings, is no disaster. In his metaphysics he continues to yoke heterogeneous elements together, but the violence with which this used to be done has made way for a smooth urbanity.

An opposite suggests itself—the shade of Yeats, with his increasing anguish in age, his crying out for passion and certainty. Yeats is on Auden's mind also; he is mentioned on several occasions, and each time is shown to be mistaken. The qualities that, in spite of his intelligence, Auden has never shown, are precisely those that make Yeats a great poet: mystery, the development of ideas painfully from within the psyche—rather than by picking them up here and there; an absolute, and perhaps ridiculous, awareness of his own identity. To be a great poet one has to risk being a fool; it is the one risk Auden has never taken.

The Dyer's Hand is so readable that I am tempted to follow Auden's suggestion for reviewers and simply quote. For example, there is his analysis of the "motiveless malignity" of Iago. The secret is, Iago was a practical joker. Even more interesting is the opinion of Desdemona: "It is as if she had suddenly realized that she had made a *mésalliance.* . . . Given a few more years of Othello and of Emilia's influence and she might well, one feels, have taken a lover." This is a brilliant intuition, for it explains why we feel that *Othello* is a tragedy, that is, inevitable, although it seems, with the famous handkerchief, merely an accident. Auden's remarks on life are no less interesting than those on literature. There is this

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LOUIS SIMPSON teaches at the University of California at Berkeley. His most recent books are *Riverside Drive,* a novel, and *James Hogg, A Critical Study.* A new volume of his poems, *At the End of the Open Road,* will be published this year by the Wesleyan University Press.

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appalling *aperçu*: "In a game, just losing is almost as satisfying as just winning. But no man ever said with satisfaction, 'I almost married the girl I love,' or a nation, 'We almost won the war.' In life the loser's score is always zero." Of particular interest are his observations of America, and his judgments of American writing. From our point of view, it is a stroke of luck that the foremost English poet decided to make his residence in America. Play of intellect is the quality that most American poets, in their inspired ignorance, have lacked.

For Spaces of Freedom

ON REVOLUTION. *By Hannah Arendt. Viking. $6.*

Reviewed by MERLE FAINSOD

Of Hannah Arendt it can never be said that she wastes her talents on small themes. Even when originality spills over into wrong-headedness, as it on occasion does, and brilliance takes the form of a coruscating display of learning rather than an illumination of her main argument, her insights and perceptions hold out far greater interest and stimulation than the safe and cautious generalizations of less venturesome minds.

Despite the title of Dr. Arendt's volume, her concern, as she frankly acknowledges, is not "with the history of revolutions as such, with their past, their origins, and course of development." Her major preoccupation is with the relation of revolutions to the extension of political freedom, by which she means the right "to be a participator in government," and to share in public power. The word revolution, she reminds us, originally carried the connotation of restoration; it involved revolving back to "old times when things had been as they ought to be." The notion of revolution as marking a complete break with the past, as incorporating a spirit of innovation and novelty, is a highly modern conception which, in Dr. Arendt's view, does not really emerge until the French and American Revolutions. Even in these Revolutions the initial roles were played "by men who were firmly convinced that they would do no more than restore an old order of things that had been disturbed and violated by the despotism of absolute monarchy or the abuses of colonial government."

In undertaking to distinguish between the American and French Revolutions, Dr. Arendt points out that the so-called social question, the problem of misery and want, played a minor role in the American Revolution, and that the energies of the founders were concentrated on the task of building a secure constitutional order, intended to be enduring, drawing on the accumulated wisdom of the ages and based on an awareness of the fallibility of men as it had been revealed in their own experience. In the French Revolution, on the other hand, the constitutional draftsmen were swept aside by their inability to come to grips with the social question; a revolution made in the name of liberty and taken over by leaders who promised to wipe out misery ended by creating a despotic terror which yielded neither freedom nor alleviation of want.

Paradoxically, the American Revolution was the victim of its success while the attraction of the French Revolution for future revolutionaries was magnified by its failure. The American Revolution exhausted its revolutionary potential in the very act of fulfilling its constitutional aspirations, while the growing affluence of the United States rendered its experience increasingly irrelevant for revolutionaries for whom poverty was the central problem. The mystique of the French Revolution remained compelling precisely because it posed the social question and made all other issues subordinate to its solution. The completion of the social revolution became a holy mission and a historical necessity for Robespierre's revolutionary successors.

To Hannah Arendt, for whom the prime justification of revolution is the political freedom that it hopefully may generate, this paradox is particularly tragic and even infuriating. In her search for a way to

✪ MERLE FAINSOD is director of the Russian Research Center at Harvard University.

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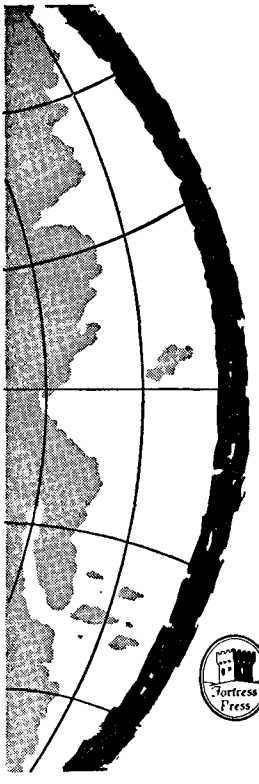

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revive the libertarian revolutionary impulse in American political life, she turns to Jefferson for inspiration and finds in his proposals for "elementary republics" at the ward level a way in which citizens may significantly participate in the political dialogue. Trying to salvage such comfort as she can from the revolutions launched under the banner of liberty that ended up as totalitarian dictatorships, she points out that genuine popular organs, communes, councils, *räte* and soviets, not unlike Jefferson's "elementary republics," made their spontaneous appearance in the French, German, Russian and Hungarian Revolutions before they were suppressed or subjected to manipulation by leaders of the revolutionary parties.

This bare summary does less than justice to the subtlety, the sophistication and the learning with which Dr. Arendt presses her case for her own version of meaningful revolution. Devoted as she is to enlarging "the spaces of freedom" in which the average citizen can act and form his own opinion in a significant fashion, and hostile as she also is to any form of messianic utopianism that suppresses freedom in the name of popular welfare, she ultimately takes refuge in her own, or rather Jefferson's brand of town meeting utopianism to symbolize the American revolutionary alternative to Communism. Attractive as this vision may be to many Americans with a nostalgic longing for simpler days, it is doubtful that it will carry us very far toward a resolution of the world's problems.

"The Tigers of Development"

THE GREAT ASCENT. *By Robert L. Heilbroner. Harper & Row. $4.*

Reviewed by RICHARD E. MOONEY

A few years back George Gallup took a popularity poll on the programs of the federal government. Foreign aid finished last.

If common impression is valid, a similar poll today would show the same or worse. It is an old truth that this program has no constituents, no one who argues from the pocketbook on its behalf. American industry, a direct beneficiary, thinks private investment is better. Among indirect beneficiaries there seems to be indifference, as among Spanish-speaking Americans, for instance, when the Treasury rescues a good Spanish-speaking neighbor for the umpteenth time. As for the general public, see Gallup: it costs too much, it's ridden with graft, and there are greater needs than feeding Hottentots, particularly ungrateful ones.

To prove itself the program has had to suffer two painful excursions through Congress each session, has taken on new administrators with a frequency that precludes experienced control, and has halted for reorganization five times in fifteen years. Time has done it few favors. Aided nations act more defiant than kept. Outcroppings of scandal and waste discourage even the faithful. *The Ugly American* reinforces the suspicious.

The casual friend of foreign aid may see in this history, in the survival despite adversity, the stuff that will keep the cause alive so long as it is needed. After all, the cause is just and the sponsorship strong. If this be comfort, read Robert L. Heilbroner's *The Great Ascent: The Struggle for Economic Development in Our Time.* The tale it tells is that "in our time" there will be far more struggle than development. Our patience has not even been tested yet.

This is a compelling book. Its quality is in its description of the struggle, present and prospective. Its proposals for development are limited and rather generalized, but this is not the purpose of the book. Mr. Heilbroner states himself that his purpose is "to help us form another attitude to the Great Ascent."

Mr. Heilbroner is a writer, teacher, lecturer in economics and the social sciences, author of *The Worldly Philosophers* and *The Future as History.* His new work is short and forceful.

The attempt of more than one hundred nations and their two billion peoples to make the Great Ascent, Mr. Heilbroner says,

✪ RICHARD E. MOONEY is a member of the Washington bureau of the *New York Times.*

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"towers over any previous enterprise of man." This is no mere struggle against poverty. "The social, political and economic institutions of the future are being shaped for the great majority of mankind."

He uses a dramatic device to jog the reader from the armchair to the hovel where the ascent begins—stripping him, paragraph by paragraph, of furniture, clothes, house, newspapers, literacy, the mailman, doctors, hospitals and, finally, money. But in the main the jogging comes from exposition of the facts of life and custom and thought in the underdeveloped world. Mr. Heilbroner covers a wide range of points that are frequently made and others that are less familiar, all leading to the conclusion that the ways of, and the ways out of, underdevelopment are not "the American way."

Some of the well-known facts of underdeveloped life conflict outright with the American way. Men who have nothing find status in having large numbers of children, and assurance of support in old age. Other facts do not conflict with the American way but with what we preach. To suggest that an underdeveloped country's wealthy give land to the peasant is equated with proposing that our wealthy distribute their stockholdings.

Poverty itself is overwhelming. "Economic growth" does not mean raising the standard of living yet in any real sense. It means keeping up with the population explosion. The masses will be only a little less impoverished in future decades than they are right now, and that only if everything goes well.

Finally, representative democracy is the least likely course of government. State planning, socialism, collectivism, dictatorship—these are the alternatives that Mr. Heilbroner lays out. "Mild men will not ride the tigers of development," he warns. "Neither will mild political or economic systems contain or impel it."

Note how much of this catalog is political and social rather than economic. This is a vital point, the prospect of struggle—revolutionary struggle—before development.

The book is full of bitter pills. An Ameri-

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can believes that free democratic processes are best for all. He is told that this is not so. He imagines that the billions of dollars that have gone into foreign aid to date are changing the landscape of the world. He is told that the surface has not been scratched. He assures himself that, at least, the effort is a force for peace. He is told that the force is highly explosive.

Mr. Heilbroner is hopeful, although he does not promise ultimate success and he does promise intermediate frustration. His hope is for the underdeveloped nations, that they will make the Great Ascent. It will be extremely difficult. We must hope that the developed nations get the message. They must help more than they have, and more than they consciously contemplate.

The Exception Is the Rule

THE MIND AS NATURE. *By Loren Eiseley. Harper & Row. $2.75.*

Reviewed by PAUL B. SEARS

Loren Eiseley is a master of beautiful and sensitive writing. He is also a scientist whose discipline ranges through biology into the study of physical and social man. The sheer quality of the present brief and attractive volume is properly described by Joseph Wood Krutch as "eloquent, moving and profound." Equally merited are the judgments of its relevance to the art of teaching by Joseph H. Willetts and Carl Wittke. Would that dust jackets were always such reliable guides!

What Eiseley does is to set forth, with a rare combination of economy and expressiveness, several accounts of individual personalities, the stuff with which the teacher has to deal. His message, if it can be compressed without violence, is one that our beloved statistics too often cloud. It is simply that in mankind the exception is the rule. Dealing with it, a gamble at best, is yet one to be undertaken with courage,

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PAUL B. SEARS, former president of the American Association for the Advancement of Science and chairman of its Board of Directors, is teaching this year at Wake Forest College.

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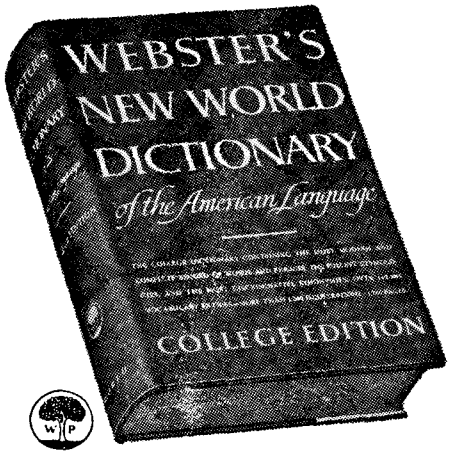

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honesty and sympathy, for the possible rewards are beyond reckoning.

The emergence of quality and achievement, as we see from the examples he cites, bears no simple linear relationship to what is ordinarily considered favorable early environment, or even to conventional estimates of youthful promise. We are reminded of Darwin, whose admission to a modern American graduate school would be doubtful, and of Einstein, grudgingly given his Swiss clerkship. The highly literate Moss Hart, who never attended high school, could have been used as further evidence.

Clearly it is time to reappraise our notion of the meaning of "underprivileged." A sentimentality that regards adversity as wholly evil is no blanket prescription if indeed it does not bring on the very evils that, as Caesar remarked *"pertinent ad effeminandos animos."* Truly underprivileged is the youngster who never comes in touch with a teacher (lay or professional) of character and dedication.

This goes for the seemingly dull and backward who may ripen late. Equally challenging of course is the duty of society to nurture the exceptionally promising pupil—an obligation so traditionally met by those trainers of greatness, the Scottish dominies. Caught between these extremes on the normal curve are the majority. Yet each of them too is a human being whose innate possibilities lie concealed. For we do not know in what proportion, as Eiseley makes clear, genes and experience interact to produce the final outcome.

Whatever may be the roots of genius, its manifestations, as he says, are culturally controlled. Thus the teacher as a "sculptor of the intangible future" has the perilous charge of transmitting the cultural heritage, while at the same time allowing for "the free play of the creative spirit."

It is well that we are increasingly respectful of quantitative method and its results. But this respect should never blind us to the fact that no man is a mere statistic. There is an essential place, not least in science, for those precisely individual accounts, too often lightly—even scornfully—dismissed as "anecdotal."

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The Reader Replies . . . . . .

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—EDITOR

In "Henry James and the Jacobites" [AS: Summer, 1962] Mr. Geismar says that "those famous two transposed chapters in *The Ambassadors* . . . have finally been put in their proper order in the New York Edition, although for fifty years nobody noticed that they were out of place." This error was first corrected in my New American Library Signet Classics edition of *The Ambassadors* (1960), whose text reproduced for the first time the First English Edition published 1903 by Methuen & Co.

For the First American Edition, James sent to Harper & Brothers two chapters that did not appear in the serial form of the novel in the *North American Review* (January to December, 1903), namely Chapter XXVIII ("He went late that evening") and Chapter XXXV ("He was to delay no longer"). But the Harper editor, in the process of inserting the new material, reversed Chapters XXVIII and XXIX, and all subsequent editions, including the New York Edition (published 1907-1909 by Charles Scribner's Sons and, in London, by Macmillan & Co., Ltd.), reprinted the defective Harper 1903 text. In November 1957 Harper issued a "corrected" text, but in fact it reprinted once more the defective Harper 1903 text with the two transposed chapters. Similar errors plagued English editions.

James himself never discovered the error. It was first discovered by Robert E. Young, an undergraduate student at Stanford, and independently in England by Susan Humphreys; but neither student examined the Methuen 1903 text. In 1958 *The Ambassadors* was published by Doubleday Anchor Books for the purpose of correcting the transposed chapters, and in my Introduction I claimed: "The present Anchor edition is a faithful copy of the text of the Methuen first edition"—only to discover when the book was already published and distributed that contrary to my instructions the Methuen edition had not been used, and once again the two ill-fated chapters were produced in reverse sequence.

When New American Library subsequently asked me to edit with Introduction the Signet Classics edition of *The Ambassadors* (1960), I searched for a copy of the Methuen 1903 edition. Scarce and difficult to obtain in this country, it exists in the rare book collections of only four libraries. I mentioned this to my Trinity College summer school students in modern poetry, and by an amazing coincidence one of them, John Seelye of Claremont Graduate School, offered me *his* battered copy. This Signet *Ambassadors* is the only reproduction of the First English Edition. By the device of brackets the most significant passages, or phrases, or words, not appearing in other editions are indicated; and footnotes provide samples of other variants in the texts of other editions.

R. W. STALLMAN
University of Connecticut

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Professor Keniston's article [AS: Winter, 1962-63] is about youth but many of his opinions apply equally to adults. In its "privatism" youth merely reflects the attitudes of its elders who feel increasingly helpless in a world of mysterious technologies, ultimate weapons and mass populations. In such a world a sense of individuality, and especially of individual responsibility, is more needed than ever before, and more difficult to achieve and maintain. Perhaps the retreat into private worlds—strikingly illustrated in art and in the novel—is a reaction to overemphasis on "relating" in education and manners. When everyone tries to like everyone, political and cultural vitality ebbs.

Not surprisingly, Mr. Keniston hints that renewed vitality will come from enlightened academicians. Doubtful. Teachers overrelate as much as their students. The thought of modern America, no less than its politics, suffers from too much pooling and reconciling of concepts. Stability is the product but the by-product is apathy.

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Once upon a time there was a war between Science and Religion. This war went on for many years until some people got together and

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started laughing themselves silly because they found out there was no reason for the war; for when Science and Religion do what they are supposed to do and don't go sticking their noses in each other's business, they don't conflict.

Mr. Krutch may have started off to say something like this about the War between Science and the Humanities [AS: Autumn, 1962], but I am not sure. At any rate, Science loses this nonexistent war because it "teaches us a great deal about things that are not really very important." Mr. Taylor in THE READER REPLIES of the Winter issue says Science wins because it does not "claim to do the impossible" (and besides, members of the American Chemical Society are maladjusted). Mr. Gilson's letter in the same issue says Science wins because: 1) we can never progress by using philosophy; 2) we cannot even argue since the argument would be subjective.

Is not Man part of the universe, and when Man learns a little about the universe does he not learn a little about himself? Is this not important? What is the criterion used to evaluate importance? Is there any "proof" that we are not just forcing our own order on what is in reality chaos and that, therefore, the task of science is not indeed impossible? The main thing that has been "learned" by Science today is that we are farther from knowing all about everything than we thought we were at the turn of the century or at any time before. Is this more progress than that made by philosophy? (Even Socrates knew he did not know anything.) Are not all measurements, reasonings and results in the last analysis subjective? (I know of two men who attacked the problem of the formation of a particular meteor stream. Their results were diametrically opposite. They both got their Ph.D.'s. Lack of information? Might not philosophy also be suffering from this same defect or does someone claim we know all about Man in any respect? And if information is lacking, whether in science or philosophy, is not the only way a result can be obtained by a value judgment?)

I realize I have oversimplified and taken out of context some of the statements made by Messrs. Krutch, Taylor and Gilson (especially Mr. Taylor); however, what can you expect when you are fighting a war that is not, for reasons that do not exist. It is a lot of fun though, so I don't really expect to see scientists and humanists stop fighting. My only question is, do we human scientists serve as buffers, spectators and/or participants?

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